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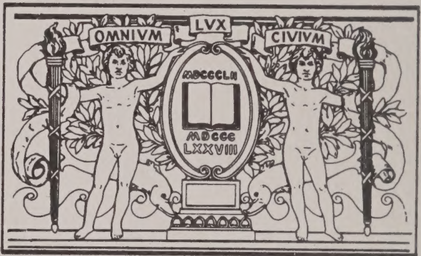

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ON

THE PHENOMENA

OF

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

BY

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LECTURE I.

THE DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION, THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, AND THE OPENING OF MAN'S INTERIOR SENSES.

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." — *Rev.* xxii. 8, 9.

"For I am fearfully and wonderfully made." — *Psalm* cxxxix. 14.

If the osseous or bony structure of the human frame be separated from the other parts of the body and held out before the view by itself alone, it will present to the eye the rude image of a man. It is in the human form, not indeed complete and full, but correct as far as it goes. It forms a skeleton which is *distinctly human;* no single bone of it is exactly such as would enter into the structure of any other created being. The first and obvious idea which the sight of it suggests to the mind is that of a MAN.

If, now, we take the system of tissues which is next above that, namely, the muscular system, which immediately clothes that of the bony frame, and separate *that* in like manner from the rest of the body, holding it up to view, we shall then have presented to us a form yet more fully human than the other, and one which more nearly resembles the perfect body of a man. Still it will be exceedingly defective, and wholly wanting in that rounded fulness of contour which characterizes the living human shape.

If, again, we take either one of the two parts of the great *vascular* system of the body, that is, the arterial or the venous system, and treat it in a similar manner, a similar result will follow, and a human form will be exhibited which, though still defective, will approach nearer to completeness.

But if instead of any of the others we select the cerebro-spinal axis, as it is called,—that is, the brain and nervous system,—as the subject of our experiment, a somewhat different effect will be produced. The form thus presented will be found to be far more perfect than either of the others. And if every ramification, and reticulation, and fibre of the nerves be faithfully preserved the image will be complete; the eye on beholding it would be deceived; and so perfect would be the representation of all the parts that, until further examination were made, we should suppose that an entire man stood before us.

Thus we find that our bodily system consists of a series of *human forms*, woven together and interlaced through each other—one form clothing another, and one form supporting another. If we stop to contemplate the combination of these different forms in another aspect, we shall discover that there is a certain successive order in the mode of their arrangement, and in the degree in which they are capable of manifesting the human form. The most gross, solid, or earthy parts are capable of manifesting it least; while as we ascend into the more refined, the softer and fleshy parts, we perceive that they gradually approach it more nearly; and when we come to the most complex, the most highly organized, and the most thoroughly vitalized of all the parts, we find that they are the most completely of all in the human form.

The mind acts the most directly or immediately upon the brain and its appendages — that is, upon the nervous system. Through this it acts upon the vascular and muscular systems, and through these, again, upon the osseous system or bony skeleton.

Thus the order of influx by which the soul operates upon and moves the body is from above downwards — from things more pure to things less pure; from tissues which are more highly organized to those which are less highly organized; from parts which are less gross to those which are more gross; from structures that are less solid to those which are more solid; and from systems which are more perfectly in the human form continuously downward into systems that are less perfectly so.

In examining the body, therefore, the farther we recede from the soul, the farther do we recede from the *human form;* while the higher we ascend *towards* the soul, the more nearly do we approach to a perfect human form.

The cause or reason of this must, we conceive, to the reflecting mind, appear sufficiently obvious. It is because the soul itself, or inmost principle of man, is in the human form.

Nor does the ascending analogy stop with the merely outward constitution. The body of the spirit, which is that next above the brain and nervous system, is still more perfectly human in all its forms and functions than the whole material body, with all its combinations and parts. As the nervous system itself, with all the grosser parts of the body taken out from it, still presents the human form entire, so the spirit, with all the gross things of the material body taken out from it, still presents the same form entire.

It is this indwelling spiritual body that imparts the form and gives consistency to the external one ; and as each successive system of parts in the natural body requires one next below it, most like itself in organization and form, into which to flow and to operate, so the more exquisite and invisible *spiritual* body requires something next below it, most nearly resembling itself in fineness of texture and fulness of form into which it can flow, so as to operate upon what is beneath it. And it is because this indwelling body is so perfectly in the human form that it requires so perfectly organized a nervous system as its first receptacle in the physical body, for it to insert itself into, to act upon, and to operate through.

During our life in this world the soul weaves for itself a spiritual body, which pervades and fills with life every portion of the material body ; and when the material body is laid aside, this spiritual body serves as the perpetual investment of the spirit in the other life.

Thus the soul is not a simple substance, — a mere abstract thinking principle, — as is so frequently argued, but a complicated organization. Like the body, it has its multitude of parts, its variety of organs, its change and flux of constituent elements. Every mental affection we experience is the indication of a change taking place in the substances which compose the spirit. Every thought we think, every emotion we feel, every act of the will, and each secret intent of the heart, is instantly and indelibly daguerreotyped upon the receptive components of the spirit, and is faithfully recorded upon its immortal tissues, remaining ever after an integrant part of its own being, to go whithersoever it goes and to live where it lives.

The apostle Paul says, in the fifteenth chapter of the First of Corinthians, "There *is* a natural body, and there *is* a spiritual body." He does not say *there is now* a natural body, and there *will be* a spiritual body at the resurrection. He speaks of them both in the present tense; of both as then existing together; of the latter as being as much a present reality at that time as the former.

Again he says, "There *are* bodies *celestial*, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another." Now, this is contrary to the common idea, which supposes that the departed spirits of men have *no* bodies, and that they will get no celestial or spiritual bodies until a future resurrection at the end of the world. But the apostle speaks of celestial bodies as present realities, coexisting with terrestrial ones, while differing from them in composition and quality.

So, too, the similitude which in this same chapter the apostle uses to set forth and illustrate the resurrection, or the process by which the spirit is raised up into another life, cannot be made to harmonize with the common popular doctrine of the resurrection in any one of its particulars. He likens it to the stalk of grain growing up from the seed when dropped into the ground. Now, the living germ which constitutes the life of that seed does not, when the seed is put into the ground, withdraw itself from the seed, leaving it to die and rot, and then go off, without any body or form, into an intermediate state, remain there, separated from it, for an indefinite period of centuries, or years, or even weeks, and then coming back, not to the old seed, but to a new stalk or blade, ready made for it and put into the ground, enter into that, and fill it with life; neither does it reënter the old seed. Such is not the process; and there is not the least analogy between the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as it is commonly taught, and the process in nature to which the apostle refers as representing and illustrating that which takes place with the spirit of man; while, on the other hand, that process does offer a most exact representation of the resurrection of the soul, as described in the writings of the New Church, and hardly any comparison can be found that would explain it to the apprehension more clearly.

The resurrection of every person takes place immediately after death; that is, as soon as the natural body is no longer capable of performing the functions for which and by means of which it is connected with the spirit, the body then drops off from the soul, and the spirit rises up into its own proper life. When the action of the lungs fully ceases, and the motion of the material heart comes entirely to an end, the spiritual body is drawn forth from the natural body, and the man rises, in complete human form, at once into the life and among the inhabitants of the spiritual world.

Now, observe the exact correspondence or analogy there is between *this* process of resurrection and that of the growth of grain. The seed is dropped into the ground, and the hard shell or covering, of the seed, that is, the *body of it*, perishes, and is dropped off; while the *internal* of the seed, that is, its very life and soul, expands itself, bursts its solid shell or covering, breaks forth into a new existence, and in a body proper to and peculiar to itself, *evolved from the old one*, rises above the clods into new light and life. The seed itself contained all this new body and new life *within* it, as a germ or form.

Even so it is with the future life of man. His natural body is the very seed, shell, or outward covering, in which his spiritual body is contained, and out of which it rises into the light and life of the spiritual world whenever his natural body is laid in the ground; and as the grain never again resumes its old, cast-off body, so neither does the departed or risen spirit of man ever return to his.

Thus it is that through a natural process which involves the apparent death of the seed, we arrive at the full and genuine development of the life of the grain. And in like manner, also, a man, by laying aside the natural body, by that very means assumes at once and forever the *spiritual* body; on leaving the natural world, enters at once into the world of departed spirits; and by a process which we call *death*, eaves what is mortal forever behind him and is raised up into eternal life. The man then finds that he has a body, head, limbs, hands, feet, a mouth, and eyes, and ears, as before. He has organs of respiration, and all the internal viscera of the body are the same; only *now* they are composed of spiritual substances alone, and have not that crass, material covering, or investment, which were adjoined to them in *this* world.

In short, the man discovers that he has lost nothing of himself whatsoever — that he has left nothing behind him, save only those few particles of the four chemical elements in which his organs had been hitherto incased. His entire organization remains still the same, and he is a man in complete form as before. His external aspect is unchanged, so that those who had known him in the life of the natural body would, if their eyes could perceive him, be still able to recognize him as readily as of old.

It may be difficult for some, accustomed to the current modes of metaphysical thinking, to conceive of a spirit as having a form, or to conceive of any form independent of crude, palpable matter; when the truth is, that matter, of itself, has no definite or determinate form, and is incapable of assuming any, except as it is acted upon and moved by some force superior to and beyond itself. The outward body is held in the particular form which it takes and exhibits by the vital forces of the spirit. And it is because the forms of the organs all exist in the spiritual body within, that the various particles which are derived into the material body from our food arrange themselves into these several shapes. It is plain that the body is in the form of the vital forces which animate it, and these vital forces *are* spiritual, constituting the body of the spirit; and these vital forces remain the same, and continue their action, whether particles of matter are given them to act upon or not.

For instance: a whirlwind is a particular form of motion in the air; but a *pure* whirlwind is totally invisible to us; that is, when there is nothing *but* air in motion we do not see it; but when it has picked up from the earth a parcel of leaves, dust, or papers, and arranged them into its own shape, bearing them along in its progress, — thus taking on as it were a material body, — it becomes visible to our eyes and we call it a whirlwind. When the same form of aerial motion descends upon the ocean, and hurriedly and majestically wraps itself in a body composed of water drops from the sea, we call it a waterspout. But it soon drops this water body, and hies away, perchance, to the desert, where it as hastily takes up the particles of sand, swiftly arranges them into the gigantic proportions of its own form, and stalks off majestically over the burning plains enrobed in a complete material body. But as soon as it drops out from its folds the particles of water or the particles of sand, it straightway becomes invisible again, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

So it is with every one who has dropped out the material particles of his physical body from the folds of his spirit — the man is still there, but he is invisible to *us*.

As the spiritual body possesses all the organs and parts which the natural body possesses, so it performs functions corresponding to those which the natural body performs. Our outward bodies are fitted to act in, and to be acted upon by, the substances of the natural world, while our interior bodies are correspondingly fitted to act in, and to be acted upon by, the substances of the spiritual world.

It is the spiritual body here which really performs every function. For behind the material apparatus of the eye there is a spiritual eye, that does all the seeing — looking out through its nice arrangement of humors and lenses as a man looks out through a window or a telescope. And behind the material apparatus which constitutes the outward ear there is a spiritual ear, which does all the hearing. The same is true of the other human senses and functions. As long as they are covered with the material organs they are capable of perceiving material things, of acting upon them, and of being acted upon by them. When the material organs are removed, these interior senses then become capable of perceiving and acting upon things which are uncovered like themselves — that is, spiritual things, the objective existences of the spiritual world.

It will probably strike the minds of many who have not given the subject much consideration very singularly, that it should be asserted that there are in the invisible world a great variety of outward objects for the eye to rest upon, as there are in this world. The idea that there are in heaven, and in other parts of the spiritual world, trees, gardens, fields, vineyards, houses, palaces, cities, uses, employments, books, utensils, and implements and instruments of all kinds, and that the outward aspect of men and things which meets the eye there is highly similar, in many important respects, to that which meets the eye here, will no doubt appear exceedingly fanciful — a poetical conceit of the imagination, not to be indulged in or believed by sober-minded or sensible men. But a little patient thinking in regard to the matter will, we feel assured, serve to do away with this first hasty conclusion.

In the first place, let each one fairly settle in his own mind whether he does really believe, firmly and surely, that the spirit exists at all after it leaves the body. We affirm that it does, and on that assumption base our subsequent conclusions. In the next place, let each one decide for himself whether the immortal spirit comes into the future state of its existence deaf, dumb, blind, and insensible to touch — without sensational feeling; and if that is the kind of immortality to which we are all hastening — an eternity of imprisonment within the single bounds of our own consciousness, forever dark and lone, shut up from all outward objects, and from all intercourse with our fellows. Would any care to seek or live for such an immortality as that? If such a view be not the true one, — and we affirm that it is not, and the common sentiment of Christendom responds to the same, — then the spirit in that state must be endowed with the various faculties pertaining to men; he must be able to see, hear, speak; to feel, touch, and handle. And if a spirit can see, he must have an organ of vision — something to see with — which is an eye; if he can hear, he must have something to hear with, which is an ear; if he is not dumb, but can speak, he must have an organ for the utterance of speech; we all know what that is; if he can touch, feel, and handle, he must have cuticular sensation, and hands to touch and handle with; if the departed saint can go at once to walk the streets of the heavenly city, he must be provided with feet, or he will be unable to walk in that other life.

Now, let each one reflect within himself upon that world in which the spirit goes to live when he is withdrawn from the body, having, as we have seen, eyes and the faculty of seeing, ears and the faculty of hearing, a mouth and the power of speech, hands and the sense of touch.

Is that world totally without contents? Is there no object there for the eye to see, no sound for the ear to hear, no language for the mouth to utter, no articles or instruments for the hands to handle? Is that world all one vast, bleak, blank emptiness? Has God created a heaven of angels, or a spiritual world, with nothing in it? Such a world certainly would fall very far short of being an object of desire, and the people of God could look forward to it with none of the earnest enthusiasm of fervent hope. But such a spiritual world is not only altogether inadequate to satisfy the religious consciousness of mankind, it is also wholly unscriptural. Every reference made to heaven and the spiritual world in the sacred writings speaks of them and shows them as being a state of existence which is filled with external objects to be seen and heard. Some of the relations in regard to that other life which occur in the Bible describe scenes the most magnificent and grand. The multitude of the things spoken of, and the minuteness with which they are described in the writings of the New Jerusalem, find an abundant warrant and confirmation in the books of the ancient prophets. St. John, in the Apocalypse, says, "After this I looked, and, behold, *a door was opened in heaven;*" and he immediately proceeds to give an account of things which he saw there. Among them are mentioned a throne, a rainbow, seven lamps burning, four and twenty seats around the throne, and elders sitting, clothed in raiment, a sea of glass, a book sealed with seven seals, golden vials full of odors, and an innumerable multitude of other things, which every reader of the Scriptures will spontaneously call to mind. The whole apocalyptic vision is a record of things actually heard and seen by the apostle in heaven, or in the world of spirits. Similar are all the accounts given of the other state of existence by the prophets of the Old Testament. They, whenever their *eyes were opened*, all saw and heard a multitude of things which had an objective and real existence in the worlds of departed spirits. Many of the objects and scenes that are described by them are such as might be seen or might occur in this world; while many others are such as could never occur here, but are peculiarities of the other life. The books of the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel may be mentioned as containing the most striking or remarkable relations of this kind.

It must be clear to every one who will give himself the trouble to reflect upon it, that if there is *any thing* — if only a single object — in the spiritual world, then there can be no possible reason why there are not innumerable things there. If there is a substance in that other world of which a single object may be composed, or out of which a single thing may be constructed — no matter whether that object be the united parts of a human form, a covering of raiment, a throne, a golden candlestick, an altar of incense, a temple for worship, or the harp of a seraph — if any of these can come into being there, and be exhibited to view, and handled, and made use of, then the same substance which serves to compose *them* can serve also to compose *any other* article, instrument, utensil, or thing, which spirits may choose and have the ability to construct.

And spirits are men; and there is no reason to expect or believe that the inventive genius or the constructive faculties of the human mind will be diminished in consequence of its translation to a higher state of existence. There is no logical stopping-place between. We must either allow the spiritual world to be filled with the forms of a great variety of objects — places of abode, articles of clothing, every implement of use which the inventive genius of man can contrive, and all the sublimer beauties which the creations of nature can exhibit — and give them a real, definite, and substantial existence, as is done in the writings of the New Church, or else we must take the other extreme, deprive man of those faculties by which he communicates with what is around him when he enters the other life, and subtract, one after another, all the forms and scenery which fill that world, until finally there is left — nothing in it; and a world without any contents or constituent substances is a no-world, and becomes at once non-extant.

The faculty, therefore, of perceiving and being acted upon by the existences of the world of spirits is innate or natural with every man; and although the interior senses, that is, the faculties of spiritual seeing, and spiritual hearing, and spiritual touching, are not usually developed or brought into exercise so long as the material body is retained, (or while we live in this world,) yet they are sometimes brought into exercise before departure; and men, while they still live here in the natural world, are occasionally brought into a condition in which they can see, and hear, and touch the men and the things which exist in the other life; for that other world is not far off from us, as many suppose — a great way removed, located somewhere in outward space, among the stars or on the planets — but is here, every where near us and around us; and it is only because we are not in sensible communication with its inhabitants, because it is far distant from our affections, and really far removed from our belief, that it seems to be so far distant from us in space. While from inadequate conceptions of the real substantiality of pure spirit, joined to material ideas of man's spiritual *body*, some modern philosophers are driven to the peopling of the far off astronomical worlds with the spirits of the departed. If a sensible communication with the beings of the other life were opened to us, this false appearance of remoteness would be dispelled, and we should come to perceive and realize that the beings of that world were, in truth, very near to us, and that they were living and moving every where among us.

Such sensible perception, as we have said, has been enjoyed or been at times exercised by multitudes of persons, in various countries and in different ages of the world. It is through the medium of such a premature exercise of the spiritual senses of some man or men, that divine revelations have been communicated to mankind. For the purpose of effecting these revelations, the senses of those men were providentially and preternaturally (or unusually) opened at the time, and when the communication intended to be made was finished, they returned into their ordinary state, and that closed up the vision or brought it to an end.

In the case of St. John, in the Isle of Patmos, this opening of his internal sight is expressed by saying, "After this, I looked, *and behold a door was opened in heaven.*" It is differently expressed in relation to the cases of the different prophets and revelators of the Old Testament, but is called, in the more ancient records, *open vision,* or *open sight;* by which it was intended to convey the idea that the men who enjoyed the gift of this sight, could look into the world of departed spirits, and behold persons and things which were invisible to other people. Hence, in the very early times, when, both from tradition and the frequency of its occurrence, the matter was better understood than in later days, such men were called *seers*, or men who had their *eyes open.* Thus we read in the ninth chapter, ninth verse, of the first book of Samuel, where the servant of Saul advises him to consult the man of God which is in the city. "*Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake:* COME, AND LET US GO TO THE SEER; *for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer.*" And as they went on to the city where the man of God was, it is related that they met young maidens coming out to draw water, and they asked them, saying, "Is the *seer* here?"

And so again, in the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Numbers, occur the following words: "And the spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said: *he* hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, *falling into a trance*, but having his *eyes open.*" After which follows the prophecy that he uttered.

And again, in another part of the same chapter, we read, further: "And he took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose *eyes were open* hath said; *he* hath said which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High; which saw the vision of the Almighty, *falling into a trance*, but having his *eyes open.*" Then follow again the words of another prophecy.

From this we learn that Balaam, although not an

Israelite, and though a priest of what, to the Israelites, was a false religion, was, nevertheless, a *true seer,* and one whom the Lord on that occasion made use of for the utterance of a divine prophecy.

And we learn further, from this and other similar statements in different parts of the Scriptures, that the way in which the seers, the prophets, and revelators were enabled to look into the other world, and behold thus the scenes there, to hear the sounds uttered there, and to report over to the inhabitants of this world the things which they heard and saw, was by the opening of their interior or spiritual senses.

Thus, when Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Elisha, Ezekiel, the women at the sepulchre of our Lord, the disciples on the mount of transfiguration, and at the time of the Lord's ascension, saw, heard, and conversed with angels and the spirits of departed men, they did so by virtue of the opening within themselves of the spiritual senses of seeing and hearing. The change wrought was in *themselves,* and not in the beings who appeared to them. The spirits or angels did not come to them from a great distance, and suddenly assume a body for the purpose of rendering themselves visible, and then put off the form again when they vanished.

The vanishing was caused by the closing up of the spiritual senses, and the return of the person to his ordinary state. So, when the angels appeared to the shepherds in the plain, announcing to them the birth of the infant Savior, they appeared by virtue of the opening of the spiritual senses in the shepherds ; and when they went away again into heaven, the going was an apparent one, caused by the gradual *closing up* of the spiritual senses of the shepherds.

The common doctrine on this subject seems to us as crude and as unscriptural as that in relation to the resurrection of the material body. The theory which is generally entertained as Christian doctrine is, that the angels and the souls or spirits of men have no distinctive forms whatever; that they live somewhere in the material universe, at an inconceivable distance from the earth, and that when they have been seen by men, they have flown hither from that distance and momentarily assumed *natural bodies*, thus rendering themselves visible to the *natural* eyes of those to whom they appeared; that when they disappeared from the eyes of the men, they dropped those natural human forms, and returned into their former unformed or no-formed condition. We do not give this as the universal, but only as a very general belief.

If the angels and spirits who have appeared to men did so by the assumption, for the occasion, of natural forms not usually belonging to them, and disappeared again by virtue of laying aside or putting off those natural human forms, then we ask, Ought not, and would not, those rejected or cast-off forms be found in the spot where the angel or spirit vanished? If they were forms visible to the natural eye, then the natural eye would continue to discern them after the spirit had left them. If the angel who wrestled with Jacob had vanished from him by virtue of putting off a natural form, would Jacob not have seen the cast-off form as a dead body on the ground before him? If the angel who appeared to Zachariah in the temple, foretelling the birth of John the Baptist, had disappeared by such a process, would not the rejected body have been subsequently discovered in the temple?

And if the angel who appeared to Manoah and his wife, announcing prophetically the birth of Samson, and disappeared from them by going up in the flame of the fire, had done so by dropping off a form visible to the natural eye, would not that rejected form have been seen by them as a dead body falling back into the fire?

No such forms have ever been discovered or seen, and may we not conclude, therefore, that the supposition that such was the mode of their appearance and disappearance is wholly gratuitous and erroneous?

But our chief allegation against the theory in question is, that it is altogether contrary to the uniform teaching of the Scriptures to assume that angels and departed spirits are without form; that they are by their own nature and essence in any other than the human form, or that they in any way *change* their forms when they appear to men. Not a single hint of any thing of the kind which this theory supposes occurs any where in Scripture; on the other hand, the very opposite view is every where maintained. The appearing spirits and angels are on every occasion represented as being most perfectly in the human form. That is referred to as being their normal form, the one constantly belonging to them. They are almost always at first mistaken by the beholders for men, and in the written accounts are called *men* as often as any thing else. Thus it is said of the case of Jacob, that a *man* wrestled with him until the morning. Manoah called the angel which appeared to him *a man*; and the angel which showed all the wonders of the Revelation to John is called a man; and at the close, the angel told him that he was one of John's own brethren the prophets; hence, that he had once been a man, and lived on this earth.

Thus the effect of the descriptions given in the Bible is to convey the idea that both angels and spirits are men, who, having passed out of their material bodies, have risen up in their spiritual bodies, and are now living in the spiritual world ; and that they may at any time become visible to us by the opening of our interior sight.

The very expression used in regard to the men who saw those things, that they *had their eyes open,* shows that their power of seeing was in a different condition from that of other men, and from that of their own at other times. Their *natural* eyes could not have been referred to, for all the other persons concerned had those open, and it is clear that no such mode of speaking would occur in the Scriptures in regard to our ordinary state of natural vision. The form of words, too, so frequently occurring, that such and such things were seen or heard *in vision,* clearly enough implies that they were *not* heard and seen in the person's ordinary state.

Besides this, the circumstances related to have taken place on various occasions where open vision occurred unmistakably show that the change by which the spiritual beings became visible was one that took place in the perceptions of the men themselves. In order to make this point unquestionably clear, as being the uniform teaching throughout all parts of the sacred writings, we will select only a single instance in illustration, from each of the three great divisions of the Bible — one from the historical part of the Old Testament, one from the prophetical part, and one from the apostolical writings of the New.

The first instance we shall refer to is that of the young man with the prophet Elisha, recorded in the sixth chapter of the second book of Kings. The prophet, who was a seer, and had, consequently, his spiritual eyes open, saw, in the world of spirits, the mountain over against them full of horsemen and chariots. But the boy, in his natural state of vision did not see them. But Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, open thou *the eyes* of the young man. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and then he *also* saw the mountain covered in like manner. Here it is distinctly stated that the way in which these spiritual beings became visible to the young man was by an opening of *eyes* in him which were not open in his ordinary state of natural seeing.

The second instance we shall cite is from the book of the prophet Daniel. It is sufficient that we quote the words as recorded in the tenth chapter and seventh verse. After describing the man or angel who appeared to him, he says, "*And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they ran to hide themselves.*"

Now, if the angel here had assumed a form visible to the natural eye, he would have been just as visible to the men who were with Daniel as he was to Daniel himself. But it is because angels are not visible to the natural eye that the men saw him not; and it is because they *are* visible to the interior eye, and because Daniel had these eyes open in him, and the men had not, that he alone saw the vision.

The *third* and last instance to which we shall refer is that of St. Paul and the men who were with *him*, recorded in the book of Acts.

The apostle relates that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him, and gave him a call and a commission to preach the gospel. He saw, also, a great light from heaven shining round about him. But we read that the men who were *with* Paul *saw no light*, nor any man. This shows conclusively that their *power of seeing* was not in the same condition that his was, and that what he saw he saw by virtue of having at the moment developed in him a power of seeing different from theirs, and different from his own in his ordinary state; otherwise the men with him would have seen whatsoever *he* saw.

We presume we have adduced evidence enough from the Scriptures to show clearly and conclusively that *spirit seeing* is a power or faculty developed or brought into exercise within man himself. This also accords with all our other experience; for the world has not been in any age without its witnesses to appearances of this kind. Innumerable well-authenticated cases are on record in which the spirits of the departed have been seen by those still in the mortal body.

How many instances occur of persons who, on the near approach of death, are favored with a view of that world into which they are about to enter — seeing the persons, and sometimes hearing the music, which pertain to the spheres of the other life! Such was the case with the martyr Stephen, when stoned to death, as it is told in the book of Acts; and there is scarcely any one in the community who has not had instances of the kind come within the circle of his acquaintance, or even within that of his own observation and knowledge. The vision in these cases most usually is of some near and dear friend or friends of the person, who have departed from this world before him.

These instances also go to show that it is not with the *natural* eye that such things are seen; for the friends gathered about the bedside of the departing one see not the faces, nor do they hear the voices, of those spiritual beings whose presence then fills the room.

Persons may sometimes have one of their spiritual senses opened, while the others remain closed. Thus one may come into a state in which he will be able to *hear* spirits, without being able to see them; or he may both see and hear, without being able to feel their touch; and some may feel their touch, without either hearing or seeing them.

Thus the prophet Samuel, while he was yet a boy in the temple, with Eli the priest, heard a voice speaking to him, and calling out, Samuel! Samuel! but *saw* no one, and ran to Eli, supposing that *he* had called him. In that case his spiritual *hearing* only was opened. It was the same with the men already referred to, who were in company with St. Paul. Their spiritual *hearing* only was opened; for they, too, heard a voice, but *saw* nothing.

In the case of Jacob wrestling with the angel there must have been an opening of all three of the principal spiritual senses; for he not only *saw* and *heard*, but also manifestly *touched* him. There are also a number of other cases recorded in the Scriptures, where the sense of spiritual touch was opened; but further illustrations of this point need not now be cited.

It seems to have been a general rule in the divine providential economy by which the developments of the Jewish and early Christian churches were carried on, that there should be, nearly all the time, *some one* who enjoyed the gift of spiritual seership, and that the communication between the spiritual and natural worlds should be thus kept open. There is sometimes an appearance as though it was deemed highly important to the moral well being of the people that, by the presence of some such continuous chain of facts as those visions would afford, they should be constantly reminded that there *is* a spiritual world, and a spiritual existence and power which are above nature. We read in one place, in the book of Proverbs, that "*where no vision is, the people perish;*" therefore we find that from the call of Abraham down through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph — after that, through Moses, Aaron, and Joshua — and, lastly, through Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and all the subsequent prophets — there was kept up a succession of seers, or revelators, who possessed the gift of open vision into the world of spirits, and who, therefore, could receive communications from the inhabitants of that world, and make them known to those of this world. This line of succession was indeed frequently interrupted, and sometimes the break extended over a considerable period. But the interruption was regarded as a proper source of regret, and as a circumstance in some sense worthy to be deplored. In the days of the judges there seems to have been a time when its suspension was longer than usual; for in a certain place in the first book of Samuel* we read that *the word of the Lord was precious in those days,* (for) *there was no* OPEN VISION.

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* 1 Sam. iii. 1.

Thus far we have endeavored to show the method in which *divine* revelations have been communicated to men; and therefore have confined our attention chiefly to the scriptural accounts. From this we do not intend to have it inferred that therefore *all* communications made from the spiritual world are divine in their character, or that they all come from angels or good spirits. On another occasion it will be our design to take up another branch of the subject, and show the various sources from which revelations from the other world may come; and with a single other remark we shall now close this portion of our subject.

It will have been seen that our arguments for, and confirmations of, the views here presented have been drawn mainly from the sacred Scriptures, and that they have been thus derived by virtue of putting a new interpretation upon the descriptions brought into view. We have read the passages in a different light from that in which they are usually read, and have endeavored to show them really to mean something different from that which they have in this respect been commonly understood to mean.

Now, this is the general character of the New Church revelation. It is a further *explanation* of the revelations which have come before. It is based entirely upon the sacred Scripture, or word of the Lord, and consists of a fuller and clearer exposition of the truths which are already contained in that. This sacred book, written, in the first place, for rude, barbarous, and ignorant ages, being adapted to their modes of expression and their style of thought, contains many things on its external surface, or in the mere letter, which the human mind now, after ninety successive ages of training, of discovery, and development, plainly sees to be, in a number of cases, *unscientific,* in others *irrational,* and in some *immoral.*

But that rude letter is only the outer garment in which it was necessary for the divine truth to clothe itself, as a protection for its inner life against the long spiritual coldness of those darksome ages. The rational difficulties which seem to stand in the way of receiving the truth of this divine volume are removed as soon as its narrations come to be understood in their genuine sense. Its *real* meaning is every where a spiritual one; and those outward, natural things of the letter all have actual spiritual realities to which they correspond, and which they are here used to denote. With a knowledge, therefore, of the spiritual things to which these accounts relate, we have a key by which to understand and interpret them correctly.

As foreseen by St. John in vision, this "*book,*" which, it must be remembered, is said to have been written *within,* as well as on the outside, is now "*opened,*" in order to meet the spiritual wants of these new times; its "*seven seals*" have been taken off, and, through the revelations made for the New Jerusalem, men, if they desire it, are enabled to see all the statements and teachings of this book explained in clear, rational light, and to know and understand the genuine meaning of all its doctrines as they are known, and understood, and taught among the angels.

LECTURE II.

ON THE ASSOCIATION AND COMMUNICATION OF DEPARTED SPIRITS WITH MEN.

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." — *Isaiah* viii. 19.

On a previous evening we endeavored to direct attention to some features of the spiritual constitution of man, and to the method in which the divine revelations recorded in the Scriptures were communicated to the persons who received them. On the present occasion it is our design to offer a few remarks on a *parallel line* of communications from the other world, which are also mentioned in the Scriptures, of a somewhat different kind, quality, and origin.

When a man first puts off the material body, and from it rises forth into the light and life of the spiritual world, he is in the full possession of every sense and faculty which he possessed here. He has, moreover, *finer* perceptions of all kinds. His organs are less gross or corporeal than they were here; being more vitally and purely organized, they are, therefore, far more sensitive than they were here, and are more easily and deeply affected by the objects of that world than they formerly were by the objects of this. He is then enabled to *see* much more perfectly than he could while in this world, to hear in much greater perfection, and enjoys also a far more exquisite sense of touch. A similar remark may be made in regard to his intellectual faculties. The clouds and obscurities which matter interposed being removed, they become clearer and brighter, while *all* his powers, both of body and mind, find greater freedom of operation, and are brought into a fuller and more active exercise.

In short, he is in all things more fully and completely *human* than he ever was before. At that stage of his progress, the man-spirit is neither in heaven nor in hell, but in the world of spirits, which is an intermediate place, state, or world, midway between the heavens and the hells, communicating on the one hand with the former, and on the other hand with the latter.

In that intermediate world the man passes successively through *three* distinct states, or spheres, or circles of spiritual existence.

The first state is called that of the exteriors, and is a sphere in which the departed spirit is in a condition of life very similar to that in which he was before he left this world. That life is only a further continuation of this life, and death is simply the passage. Hence the change at first effected in a man is very slight. His habits, manners, outward aspect, and external moral character are the same; he maintains a general deportment, and exhibits general qualities, like those which he used to maintain and exhibit before men here.

But after a certain period, which is longer or shorter according to the circumstances in each particular case, he passes out of this state, and comes into the second. This is called, to distinguish it, the state of the *in*teriors. In this sphere the spirit is let into that state of thinking and feeling in which he was *internally* in the world, when he was alone by himself, and when his desires, and intentions, and thoughts took their own flow in perfect freedom. Outward restraints being withdrawn, and the exteriors of his life being quiesced or laid asleep, the fountains of his *in*terior life are broken up, and his interior thoughts and affections brought into open activity and play. He then no longer appears in the character which he simulated or habitually put on before men, but manifestly assumes that which was proper to his inmost thoughts and feelings while in the world. The change which this transfer from the first to the second state after death effects upon spirits may be compared to the change wrought in this world upon many persons by an emigration from an old state of society, in which they have been educated, and where they are surrounded by many social, civil, and moral restraints, to a new and unformed state of society, like that of California or Australia, where those restraints are removed, or exist only to a limited extent. The interior states of men, before hidden or buried, are then brought to the surface, and the transformations of outward character thus wrought even in *this* world are often wonderful to the beholders. In the *other* life, among spirits, the changes thus often effected are far *more* wonderful, for the process there is more thorough and deep.

The *third* state into which spirits pass is one of separation or judgment — a state or sphere in which those who in passing through the previous state have shown themselves to be internally good, are instructed and prepared for heaven; and those who have there shown themselves to be internally *evil*, turn themselves in an opposite direction, and make ready to unite themselves completely to spirits of their own like. With the wicked, the third state follows on so closely upon the second, and is so intimately connected with it, that the two may be more truly said to constitute but a single continuous state.*

From this *third* state, therefore, the next stage of progress is either, on the one hand, *upward* into some society of the heavenly world, or, on the other hand, *downward* into some society of an opposite kind.

There are, also, three heavens above, and three hells beneath; but of these it is not our present purpose further to speak.

These three states, through which we have described the departed spirit as passing, may be compared to the bud, the blossom, and the fruit, of a tree. The man-spirit passes through them by virtue of the inherent laws of his own constitution. They are the successive unrolling or development of different degrees of his own life germ. In the *first* state the life of his spirit may be said to be in the bud; it is swelling and active, but still closed up, as it were, by the life of his exteriors which he brought with him from the world. In the *second* state it flowers out, so to speak, opens, and expands itself, bursts its enclosure, displaying its quality and disclosing its innate tendencies. It thus and there gives full promise of what it *will* be. In the third state it bears its fruit, and whether that be evil or good, declares and fixes its quality, at the same time determining its permanent condition or state. Then comes the harvest, and it is now ready to be gathered into one or the other of those two worlds into which all spiritual beings finally go.

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* For a fuller description of the three states, see Swedenborg's Treatise on Heaven, the World of Spirits, and Hell, from No. 491 to No. 520.

It is from the intermediate world of spirits that the manifestations to and communications with men, which are really made by spirits, proceed. When angels are commissioned by the Lord to communicate with men, and to open heaven to them, by opening their internal senses, they come down into the world of spirits to do it. The communication between the earth and heaven is through the world of spirits. So too, when evil spirits from the hells, that is, devils or satans, come to speak with, to infest, enter into or possess men, it is accomplished by their coming up out of their customary abodes, into the world of spirits.

As the spirits of the departed are every where around us, living and moving in close proximity to the inhabitants of this world, therefore our minds are in close contact with their minds, and are operated upon by the influences flowing from them. Their influences powerfully affect us for good or for evil; their modes of feeling and wishing, and their forms of persuasion or thought, constantly tend to propagate themselves over into our minds, and to become states of thought and feeling in us. All through our lives in the natural world, spirits are thus intimately associated with us, the *good* as well as the evil. This double association with both good and evil spirits leaves us in a state of spiritual equilibrium, or freedom of choice; the influence of the good counteracting as much as possible the baleful influence flowing from the evil. When we indulge in evil states of mind, we thereby attract the *evil* spirits more nearly to us, and into a more intimate conjunction with us, and when we put away evil states of feeling, willing, and thinking *from* us, and strive after good, we then draw the good spirits and angels into closer connection with us, and they are able to affect our minds more powerfully with their kind of influences.

The quality of the influences we draw upon our minds from the world of spirits, depends upon our own choosing. The great and all-prevalent law of spiritual affinity regulates both the kind and the changes of our spiritual associations. We attract to us those spirits who are most like ourselves, and for whose tastes, desires, and habits of thought we have the strongest or deepest sympathy.

Under ordinary circumstances, this association of departed spirits with men is carried on unconsciously to both. Men are not aware of the presence of spirits, nor are spirits sensibly aware of the presence of men. They know indeed the general fact that they are in such a communication or association with men, but usually are not momentarily sensible of the contact. The two minds dwell together and operate upon each other by means of their loves or affections; that is, the habitual desires which animate them; but they are separated as to their conscious thoughts. This wall of separation, however, between the conscious thought of the two minds may sometimes be broken down, and the spirit and the man be brought thus into a sensible, but yet only internal or mental communication. This constitutes a disorderly association with spirits, and is one which is exceedingly dangerous to the person in whom it occurs. For when a spirit comes to a man in this state, he instantly puts on every thing in the man's mind, the same as though it was in his own mind. He at once reads the whole of the man's memory better than he himself can, and enters together with him into all his states of thought and feeling. While the spirit remains in this kind of connection with the man the two minds are in much the same relative condition that two reservoirs of water are when connected with each other by a conduit or pipe. The contents of each flow and reflow reciprocally into the other; whatever affects one immediately affects the other also. Whatsoever the man thinks the spirit thinks, and whatsoever he knows the spirit knows. And on the other hand, whatever the spirit brings forth in his own mind comes immediately into the man's mind, however evil or dire it may be; and the man knows no otherwise than that all those things are his own; no otherwise than that they are produced in his own mind. It is in this way that possessions occur, and that various insanities are often produced; the multitude of things thus flowing into the man's mind, over which he has no control, giving rise to the phenomena that are sometimes exhibited in certain cases of mental aberration; and is the reason why persons in that state utter so many things that are far removed from and at variance with their ordinary healthy states of mind.

A wickedly disposed spirit coming to a man with whom he can effect this kind of connection can sometimes flow in suddenly upon his mind, and insert *his own* memory in the place of the man's memory, thus cutting off, as it were, the thread of the man's memory, and inducing a state of forgetfulness. While this state lasts the man is carried away, as it were, by a kind of mental whirlwind, which shows itself frequently in outward acts of violence or disorder. The spirit then stirs him up to do whatsoever he wills to have him do; he makes use, in fact, of his organism, for the time being, for the purpose of effecting his own ends, and causes the man to commit suicide, inflict injury upon others, or perform any other direful act he may wish to impel him to.

Very many things might here be said, showing the imminent dangers arising to men from having their minds consciously or too intimately associated with the minds of spirits; but the space we here have to spare will not allow it.

There are a great many different ways in which the door that separates the two worlds may be opened, and through it sensible impressions be communicated from one to the other. But, as a general remark, we may say that for the most part they are liable to very great abuse, and are exceedingly dangerous. This door should never be forced open or broken into from the outside. We should always wait to have it opened to us from within, in an orderly manner. It is sometimes so opened by divine permission, by angels or good spirits, but never except for some high purpose, or with some beneficent end.

There are also multitudes of spirits on the other side of the veil, who, for a vast variety of vain purposes of their own, would be glad to open and keep up an outward sensible communication with men in the body. These are, for the most part, a low order of spirits; for, as a general thing, the more gross, worldly, and sensual a man's life has been while he has been in the body, the longer will he remain in close proximity to the sphere of this world after he enters the other life, and the stronger will generally be his desire of communicating. We are told in the New Church writings concerning those who have so strong a desire to return into the world, and live here again, that they even make efforts to enter into other men's bodies, and to use them for that purpose — endeavoring to speak and to operate through them.

In addition to the internal or mental communications that may occasionally be opened between spirits and men, in which men may hear spirits speaking, and sometimes *manifestly feel* their operations, spirits may also operate at times upon *material objects*, so as to produce visible or audible effects, by which they may attract the attention of men, and thus commence a kind of external intercourse or communication with them, without the opening of any of their internal senses, and without any change of state on the part of the man.

This kind of communication cannot usually be effected without the intervention of some human medium; for, as we all know by experience, spirit cannot act directly upon matter without the intermediation of graduated and adapted substances, capable of receiving the influences received from the one, and conveying them over to the other. The chasm which ordinarily exists between mind and matter must in some way be bridged over, in order that impulses of the one may be propagated over and become motions of the other. Thus the will of a man can no more operate directly upon his own bones than it could upon so many stones in the street. In order to effect a communication, a series of nicely-prepared, organized substances are required. The bones must be operated upon and moved through the medium of the muscular fibres. But the mind can no more act directly upon the muscles than it could upon the bones; the system of nerves must be interposed. And even the fibres of these are altogether too gross to receive the first motions of mind; but all their tubes have to be filled with a subtile and rarefied fluid; and so on, up to a set of substances which the natural eye is incapable of viewing, and the natural finger incapable of touching, we might trace the chain of intermediation between the spirit and the grosser forms of matter.

As it is with the mind of a man in the body, so it is with a spirit who has passed out of the body. He cannot operate upon gross material things except through the intervention of a series of prepared and adapted substances fitted to act as connecting links from one degree to the other. Now, the human system, as we have described it, offers to spirits such a medium ready made. By his constitution, man is at once a resident, to some extent, in both worlds. He is a spirit clothed with a material body; therefore, while by means of his natural body he lives in communication with the natural world, by virtue of his spiritual body he at the same time lives in continual association with the spiritual world, though for the most part he is unconscious of the fact. The two worlds, therefore, otherwise separated from each other, in him meet and communicate, the one with the other. He is the *hyphen* which stands between the two worlds, and, while it marks their separation, serves at the same time to connect them together.

A spirit living in the other world may enter into connection with a spirit still in the body, and, through the substances of *his* body, open a serial connection with the surrounding substances of the material world, along which chain may be propagated impulses of a living force or energy, like the circuit of a voltaic pile, a galvanic battery, or the familiar experiments in magnetism and electricity.

Through the three general kinds of means, namely, by the injecting or infusion of ideas manifestly into the thought, or by manifest impressions made upon the spiritual senses of men, or by communicating an impulse to material objects, and thus addressing the *external* senses, communications from the spiritual to the natural world have been kept up in nearly all ages of past history. They have been hardly ever entirely suspended, though sometimes for long periods they may have been comparatively infrequent, or even exceedingly rare.

The entire ancient world, Jewish and pagan, believed in a world of demons, or disimbodied, invisible spirits, every where circumfused, and in immediate contact with this, with the inhabitants of which it was possible and common to consult. By demons were not understood devils, necessarily, but merely disimbodied spirits, either good or evil; and they were consulted or inquired of in those days in regard to future events — usually in order to ascertain the probable result or success of some enterprise or journey which the inquiring party was proposing to undertake. They were resorted to, also, in times of great distress, perplexity, and trouble, or times of public calamity, as war, pestilence, and famine.

This general belief took very different forms among different nations. By some the spirits were divided into distinct orders, or classes, and distinct functions or offices imputed to them. A great variety of opinion prevailed in respect to their nature, origin, and characteristics. Some of the old religions assigned different regions of the earth as the places of their abode. All the literature, however, of that old world is full of the doctrine and belief. The teachings of the Zendavesta, the Vedas, and the laws of Menu, all assume the truth of the general view, and themselves contain many definite theories connected with the various parts of the subject. Go where we will in the traditions of Persia, India, Medea, Assyria, Chaldea, Ethiopia, and Egypt, the same doctrine of a world of spirits turns up, forming one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, fact of all their religions.

So far as our researches into the history of antiquity extend, all the early oriental nations were much in the practice of placing themselves under some form of supernatural influences, of communicating with and receiving replies and favors from their gods, — thus holding an intercourse with the inhabitants of the world of spirits. These doctrines, traditions, and practices, with the mysterious rites which accompanied them, were transmitted from Asia Minor and from Egypt to Greece. In all those countries there existed legally recognized public institutions, where such inquiries could be made, and this kind of intercourse could be regularly carried on. These were priestly establishments, devoted to the study of the mysteries, and to the care and cure of the sick; for in those days the healing of diseases was intimately connected with the teaching of religion; and the prospective cure of a troublesome disease was one of the strongest and most common inducements for seeking unto the oracles and making inquiry of the gods.

Such institutions were the temple of Belus, at Babylon, the great temples along the banks of the Nile in Egypt, the oracle of Jupiter Trophonios in Bœotia, the Marsoor oracle at Tiora Mattiene, the temple of Esculapius at Pergamus in Asia Minor, and the oracles of Apollo at Colophon, and of Jupiter at Dodona and Delphos.

In looking over the past history of the world, with reference to this kind of phenomena, we shall find that they have been exceedingly active in periods preceding great changes in the religious state of the world, and have been the forerunners of events that have powerfully affected the minds of men on a variety of subjects, especially in regard to their religious sentiments. Thus, at and just before the time when our Lord came into the world to institute a new religion, the communications of spirits with men had become extremely common, and their influences upon them most distinct and manifest. These influences, especially so far as recorded in the New Testament, proceeded from evil sources, and were evidently highly injurious. The effect of our Lord's mission to the earth was to work a very marked change of circumstances in this respect. Those peculiar obsessions and possessions by demons, until then so common among the Jews and in the surrounding countries, thenceforth disappeared; and there is every reason to believe that the entire system of spiritual communications, as they had till then existed, were broken up by His advent, and an entire change wrought both in the population which had before filled the world of spirits, and also in regard to their action upon men. From that time forth, also, the *oracles* throughout the Greek and Roman world ceased from giving their responses, and were soon after abandoned by their former votaries.

That the Israelites and Jews were exceedingly prone to seek these communications with the spirits of the departed, is very evident from the frequent prohibitions of the practice that are met with in the Hebrew Scriptures, and from the fact repeatedly mentioned in their history, that notwithstanding the severity of the penalties prescribed against them, persons having familiar spirits, or questioners of the dead, — that is, persons who kept up a sensible communication with spirits, — continued to remain in the land, and the people continued to consult them, though generally in a secret or covert manner. As the Jewish church gradually drew towards its end, and all the Mosaic regulations as well as the statutes of Jehovah were less regarded, and therefore more frequently disobeyed, this open familiarity with departed spirits very greatly increased. And it may here be mentioned as an important and interesting confirmation of this view, that the relics or traces of the Babylonish captivity of the Jews, which have been discovered by Mr. Layard in his recent visit to and examination of the ruins of Babylon, consist almost entirely of Hebrew inscriptions relating to this kind of intercourse. Among them are the names of many of the spirits, injunctions to them to depart, various written charms, amulets, or protections against their bad influences, directions how many of the evils flowing from the association of spirits with men might be averted, and many other things of a like sort. But the most remarkable feature of the case is, that this *one idea* of the intercourse of disimbodied spirits with men should have so conspicuously possessed the minds of the Jewish people at that day as to be almost the only thing which recorded itself on their written monuments left in Babylon, with sufficient durability to transmit itself to the present time.

As before observed, when an old dispensation of religion is about passing away, and a new one is being introduced, these manifestations are more rife, and public attention is called more particularly to take notice of them ; so it may be inferred, that as in the New Church writings a new dispensation is described as being introduced, and an old one about to pass away, the receivers of those doctrines will naturally be looking for or expecting some manifestations of this kind to begin to take place. Especially when we call to mind the immense amount of information there is communicated in these writings concerning the life after death, and the fact that very great changes have within the last few years occurred in the world of spirits.

Such consequently has been the case. Many receivers of the doctrines were looking for the advent of some demonstrations of the kind, long before they actually made their appearance ; and we presume that very few, if any of them, were much taken by surprise when it began to be alleged that communications from spirits were really being received. It is of course entirely beyond our province to declare what proportion of the prevalent pretensions to that kind of intercourse are spurious and delusive, and what portion are really what they claim to be. Nor is there any call for such a decision from us. That the thing itself is intrinsically possible in the nature of things we are quite certain; that in the present spiritual circumstances of the world they would extensively reappear we think highly probable; and that they *have* thus reappeared and are existing around us we have a very large amount of human testimony of a similar kind to that upon which we receive remarkable facts in every other department of knowledge, whether of history or science.

Supposing them to be real, the next question which arises is in regard to their quality. Are they reliable? Are they divine revelations? Do they proceed from good spirits or evil spirits? from heaven or from hell? from devils or angels? From the little that is known concerning the other world, beyond the precincts of the New Church, and the extreme crudeness of idea every where prevalent of the things of another life, it was to be naturally expected that a great variety of answers would be given to these questions, and a great many different theories be devised to account for the phenomena. Such in practice has been found to be the case. And while some find in them sentiments that appear to them all wisdom, and beauty, and loveliness, and attribute to them an origin no less than heavenly, another class of inquirers discover in them the most pernicious and soul-destroying errors, the doctrines of devils, and ascribe to them an origin as low as hell itself.

Our common Protestant Christianity has placed itself in a position highly unfavorable to forming a just judgment in this matter, by its unnecessary and unscriptural denial of any *third* world in the other life — of any intermediate state of departed spirits between heaven and hell.* And this common teaching of the Protestant churches that there are but the two conditions of spiritual existence in the other life has had the gradual effect of forming the popular mind to the same idea. Hence, when any manifestations from the spiritual world occur, they have no stand-point between those two extremes, and of course are obliged to assign them all over to one or the other. Therefore it is that in our view no one of the writers who have attempted to treat these modern manifestations from the stand of the current theology has been able to appreciate the nature of the phenomena here presented, or to do impartial justice to their character. As already observed, these communications are neither airs from heaven nor blasts from hell ; are neither divinely authorized revelations from angels, nor only infernal breathings from devils. The belief which attributes them to a class of demons who have never inhabited human bodies is equally erroneous according to our views, there being none such in existence.

They are merely outbirths from the mixed and varied population of the world of spirits ; for the most part neither very good nor very evil, though sometimes rising to a more elevated standard, and sometimes sinking to a lower one than common ; conversations proceeding from persons like ourselves, who have within the last few years, or few months, or days, gone into the other world from our own midst; our relatives it may be, or friends and acquaintances. Our neighbors of ten years ago are now many of them there. Within the last twenty or thirty years a number nearly equal to our present population has passed into that life from Portland, from Boston, from New York, from New England, and so too, of course, from the whole United States, as well as every other part of the world. And the great majority of this vast concourse are still living in the world of spirits, untransferred as yet either to a higher or to a lower state of existence. There they are, with all their varied habits of thought, and many of their confirmed opinions, and with all the different degrees of moral development and character which they possessed here.

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* This remark does not, of course, apply to the doctrine of the Anglican Church, and of the Episcopal, in this country, for that definitely affirms the existence of such a state.

A moment's reflection upon the facts of the case as they actually exist, will serve to show us that conversations held with this population, or communications received from them, must in like manner be exceedingly variable, and diverse in their kind and quality; and while, on the one hand, they would possess no kind of authority or reliability as revelations of religious or divine truth, so neither on the other hand would it answer to attribute to them *en masse*, without discrimination, the quality of infernal machinations or unmitigated falsities. Great discrimination is to be used in pronouncing upon their character. Those which are harmless, or which seem to direct the minds of many towards what is good, are not to be hastily confounded with those which are manifestly evil; we must judge of them precisely as we would judge of opinions and men in the world — by their contents and by their actions. This view, which from our study of the New Church philosophy and doctrines we are led to take, is fully verified, we believe, by a fair construction of all the phenomena which have thus far been reported to have occurred.

We have said that the denial by Protestants of the third spiritual world, or intermediate state of the departed, between heaven and hell, is *unscriptural.* This is a point which in the present connection we have not the space sufficiently to show; but there are two or three considerations to which we will refer, that may serve to call attention to the subject, and excite further inquiry. 1. Besides the terms used in the Scriptures to designate heaven, there are also in the Greek two other words to denote the places of departed spirits.* One of these, *Gehenna*, unquestionably means *hell,* and is always translated so; but the other term, *Hades*, properly means the world of departed spirits; and is used to designate the *world* of *spirits*, or intermediate state, in the New Testament. The word in Hebrew answering to the Greek *Hades* is *Sheol*, and the distinction which is made in the writings of the New Church — between the world of spirits and the hells appears every where in the original languages of the Bible; and the discrimination is strictly kept up throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Martin Luther, in order to get rid of the Romish doctrine of purgatory, and remove as far as possible all Scripture warrant for the same, when he came to translate the Bible into German, rendered both words, *Hades* and *Gehenna*, as meaning the *same* place — that is, the place of eternal punishment. All the Protestant editions since have followed his example, and hence in our common English Bible we have only the single word *hell*, as a translation of both the other words indiscriminately, wherever they occur. Every reader of the classical Greek is well aware that *Hades*, in their mythology, did not mean the infernal regions, but simply the place of shades, the under-world, or the abode to which the dead first went after they left the body, and where the good and the evil were mingled together; in other words, the *world of spirits.*

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* The word *Tartarus* is once used, in the Epistle of Peter, to designate hell.

In this connection let us attend to a single circumstance brought to view in the visit of Saul to the witch of Endor, and the interview which she obtained for him with the prophet Samuel; the account of which is recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel. When he made his appearance, Samuel said unto Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing that the Lord hath departed from thee? The Lord will deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and *to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.*"

The prophet had then recently died; he was a good man — had been most unexceptionable in his character from his youth up, and became a prophet of the Lord. On the common orthodox theory he must of course have gone immediately to heaven. But here we have Samuel telling *Saul* that the very next day he and his sons should *be with him.* Saul — a wicked man, who disobeyed the voice of the Lord, who continually forsook his statutes, and from whom the Lord was about to rend the kingdom and give it to another; how could it be that he should go so suddenly and at once to heaven? Manifestly that supposition cannot be entertained. According to the common theory, he ought to have made quite as sudden descent into hell. How then, we ask, can the truth of Samuel's assertion, that the next day Saul and his sons should be in the same place with Samuel, be reconciled with the current theories in regard to the subject? Evidently it cannot be so reconciled. The only sufficient explanation of the matter is, to say, with the New Church, that Samuel was then in the world of spirits, whither all first go after death, and where the good and the evil are for a time still mingled together — the place called *Sheol* in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and *Hades* in the Greek of the New.

In bringing our remarks on the present occasion to a close, there are *two broad facts* that lie very obviously exposed on the surface of the Scriptures to which we wish briefly to advert. 1. The first of these is, that the Bible every where recognizes the truth of the prevalence of spiritual intercourse. All its language on the subject presupposes and takes for granted that those whom it speaks of as having familiar spirits, do in reality consult with departed spirits, and obtain communications from them. It every where treats the belief of the Jews, and the belief of the pagan world that such was the fact, as a *true* belief; and never, in one instance, hints that the persons are deceived in this respect, or that the belief in question was a delusion. Saul evidently thought it no delusion when he went to the woman of Endor. The men who told him of her, and he himself, had not the least doubt but that she was a real medium, and could obtain a communication for him from a real spirit. He wished her to call up Samuel for him; she called him, and Samuel came, and his communication is recorded in the Scripture. The whole transaction is recorded as a fact, and not as a *strange* fact, or one unlikely to occur, but as one which all the parties concerned expected to see.

No such words are used in the Scripture concerning such alleged communications as we now hear so frequently in the current literature. It never says, "*pseudo spiritualism*," or "*so called diviners*," or "*pretended* consulters of the dead;" but takes the whole thing for granted, and applies to them a number of terms, all implying the truth and reality of the alleged phenomena. As for instance: *Diviners of divination, cultivators of occult art, consulters of a departed spirit, the knowing or wise wizards, seekers unto the dead*, and several others. This fact we commend to the careful attention of those who in this day wrap themselves up in a mantle of unbelief on this subject, and deny the possibility or the reality of this kind of intercourse.

The other circumstance to which we allude is the fact that the Bible, while it thus universally recognizes the reality of the thing, at the same time very strictly enjoined the Israelites to refrain from seeking that kind of intercourse. The prohibitions are frequent, and the penalties prescribed for transgression severe. Saul, though king, was compelled to go by night, as he was fearful to be seen going by day.

In the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses, at the command of the Lord, says, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations; there shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."

Another translation of this passage, giving the sense perhaps more literally into English, is as follows: "When thou comest to the land which Jehovah God is about to give thee, there shall not be found in thee that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, that useth divinations, and that asketh questions of the hells, and is given to augury, and is a witch and enchanter, and that asketh questions of a familiar spirit, and is a soothsayer, and that maketh inquiry of the dead; for every one that doeth these things is an abomination to Jehovah."

Again, we read, *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;* "A man also, or a woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones." And in another place we are told that "*the* soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."

In strict accordance with the spirit of these are the words of the text: "When they say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and to wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? For the *living* to the *dead*? To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this *Word*, it is because there is no truth in them."

To what extent, and in what precise manner these emphatic denunciations and prohibitions were intended to reach the phenomena of the present time, it is not ours, individually, to say; and whether a much greater amount of intelligence on the subject, together with the vast changes which have occurred in the circumstances of the world, do not have the effect of greatly limiting their literal application to the peculiar manifestations of our own day, we cannot tell. But there they are, in the *Word of God;* and being there, we earnestly commend them, as conveying at least some degree of warning or caution, to the serious and rational consideration of those who in this day feel inclined to seek familiar intercourse with spirits, and who are content to resort to communications thus obtained for their principal supply of moral and intellectual food.

LECTURE III.

THE NEW JERUSALEM A REVEALED SYSTEM OF DOCTRINAL TRUTH FOR THE NEW AGE.

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven." — *Rev.* iv. 1.

THE immortality or future everlasting existence of the human soul is a theme which has employed the best thought of the best minds in all ages. There is a perpetual influx from the world of departed spirits into the minds of men, producing a general impression that they are to live hereafter. The inflowing of this general thought is unconsciously received by men; but yet, under the operation of its influence, rationally-minded persons can see a confirmation of the truth imaged forth by many things in nature, and a further one drawn from the constitution and phenomena of their own minds.

But notwithstanding this common idea and general belief existing in all times and among all people, nothing at all satisfactory or definite can be known concerning that future state except through express or direct revelation. We require some communication with and from that world, in order to assure us fully of the reality of its existence, the nature of its inhabitants, and the quality of the life which is lived there; and ample provision has been made by the Lord, at different ages of the world, for the supply of this want and the communication of this knowledge, so far as they could be rendered serviceable to the human race. A divinely-authorized revelation of spiritual truth has been kept in the world from the first appearance of man upon the earth down to the present hour. After the loss or disappearance of the Ancient Word, (a Bible or sacred Scripture that existed among the nations of Western Asia before the Old Testament, or Jewish Scriptures,) Abraham was called, Moses raised up, and a new revelation began to be communicated. As all who are familiar with its history are well aware, this was a slowly progressive revelation. Not only hundreds, but some thousands of years elapsed between its commencement with Abraham and its termination with Malachi. Very few indeed are the things which were at first made known to the three patriarchs, or to the children of Jacob. The fact that they were immortal, and that they should live hereafter in the spiritual world, was unknown to the Israelites during, and for many ages after the conclusion of, the wilderness journey. That there *were* spirits in the other world, who could exert powerful influences upon them, both for good and for evil, and with whom they could hold communication, was a knowledge which they had learned from the Egyptians; but whether they believed them to be the spirits of dead men, or regarded them as a distinct order of beings, is doubtful; and that they themselves would become spirits after they were dead does not seem to have entered into their conceptions in those earlier ages. It is difficult to say at what period the idea of their own immortality began to dawn upon the best minds of the Jewish church, or to what extent the few hints on the subject in the earlier and the later prophets were correctly understood by them. Upon the minds of the nation at large it is certain that it never dawned with any considerable degree of distinctness; and the idea did not rise, full orbed, above the mental horizon until the coming of the New Testament revelation. Hence St. Paul says to Timothy, in his second epistle to him, that Jesus Christ had brought life and *immortality to light* in the gospel.

The New Testament revelation, also, was a progressive one, extending from the promise of the birth of John the Baptist to the vision of St. John the Divine — over a period of, say, nearly one hundred years. It is not merely successive in point of time, but is also progressive with respect to the amount of knowledge which it communicates relating to the future life; for much more is made known concerning the world of angels and spirits in the book of Revelation than there is in the Gospel of Matthew. In fact, the book of Revelation is almost wholly taken up with an account of things heard and seen by John in the world where spirits and angels dwell.

From the hasty glance we have thus been enabled to take, on the present and on a previous occasion, of the past history of revelations and communications from the world of departed spirits, two leading facts are brought prominently into view. The first is, that the divine revelation to men has been progressively delivered. It was not all given *at once;* neither to one set of prophets, nor in a single age, nor to one nation, nor in one language. It has been a continuous chain of many successive links; not a great many centuries having been allowed to elapse without some further vision of heavenly things having been accorded to a duly-authorized seer.

The second fact is, that communications from the other world have, in all ages, consisted of two general classes or kinds; *one* which was divinely authorized, and therefore orderly and reliable, and *another not* divinely authorized, and therefore irregular, unreliable, disorderly, and liable to great abuses. All those instances in the sacred Scriptures which we have referred to to show the existence of open intercourse, through the medium of prophets or seers, were of an orderly kind, and occurred by the will of the Divine Providence in an orderly, though *unusual*, operation of the physiological and psychological laws of man's being. They were provided and caused to occur by the Lord for important purposes connected with his church and kingdom amongst men. They were in no case mentioned *sought by the person* in any way whatever, that we have any account of, but occurred by the special pleasure and provision of the Lord, for some good and important purpose relating to his church and the spiritual and eternal welfare of men.

While this was the case with all the prophets and seers of the Old Testament, and with the apostles and a few others of the New, there was another class of persons, exceedingly numerous in comparison, who had, in one way or another, more or less sensible or open communication with spirits. This numerous class, however, *desired* and *sought* for such open communications, and often, by an abuse or perverted use of the laws connecting *our* spirits with those in the spiritual world, *forced open*, to a greater or less extent, some in one way and some in another, the door that ordinarily shuts that world and its inhabitants from our view and knowledge, and thus obtained a species of unlawful or disorderly entrance, and, as a matter of course, according to the laws of spiritual association, came, by such communication, into company with, and more or less under the influence of, mixed and disorderly spirits, and frequently of evil and infernal ones. Persons seeking and holding this kind of intercourse with the other world are called "*charmers*," "necromancers," "those that have familiar spirits," "wizards," "conjurers," "witches," "soothsayers," "diviners," "magicians," "sorcerers," "seekers unto the dead," "consulters of departed spirits," &c.; and these different names are given to them as indicating the many various ways in which they operated, the various kinds of manifestation they were severally in the habit of obtaining, and the various kinds of spiritual influences which they experienced in their own persons, or caused upon others; for it must be remembered that these different terms in our own language all come from one general source, and have as the original of their meaning, "persons who hold intercourse with departed (or disimbodied) spirits."

From these two facts thus brought into view,— first, of a progressive divine revelation, and second, of a parallel line of unreliable spiritual communications,—we draw the two following inferences: namely, first, that after an interruption of many centuries we may reasonably expect a further continuance of the chain of divine revelations; and secondly, that whenever, in the history of the world, a period should occur in which the *miscellaneous* communications from the world of spirits should become again remarkably prevalent, should exhibit new and extraordinary features, and develop new and important characteristics, then there is an antecedent probability, or *a priori* presumption, that there would in the same age be sent into the world, through the Divine Providence, *another* revelation, of an authentic and reliable kind, to meet the rational and spiritual wants of the times, and to impart to the church and the world a light sufficiently full and clear to guide them safely through every exigency, and to point them unerringly to the genuine truth. Such, consequently, is the announcement which we now have to make.

With respect to the first part, therefore, we shall assume that well-authenticated facts, occurring all around us, and extending over most civilized countries, clearly enough for our present purpose demonstrate the proposition that miscellaneous communications from the other world, varying in character, quality, and degree, are now taking place in unusual and extraordinary numbers. Many of the communications claiming to be thus received contain a style of thought and are conveyed in language such as the world has never witnessed from a similar source before. And that these manifestations are exercising an influence upon the popular mind of the day such as was never before exercised by communications of a similar kind will be, we presume, also readily admitted.

It is also our high privilege to be able to affirm the presence in the world of a corresponding divinely-accorded revelation — a revelation as far exceeding those which have gone before it in the fulness of its disclosures concerning the future life as the spiritual manifestations of the day exceed in this respect those of the previous ages.

We are aware that an objection may at this point suggest itself to many minds, not from the side of spiritualism, but from that of the current old church theology; and it may be worth while to give that objection a passing notice.

It is a frequent and oft-repeated assertion, continually meeting our eyes and ears in religious books and religious discourses, that the series of divine communications to men has long since closed; that we are to have no more revelations; that the age for such disclosures has ceased, or gone by never more to return. And this proposition, by dint of continuous repetition, has come at length to be believed, as though it had some solid or sufficient ground upon which to rest. But this supposition will, on examination, be found to be very far from true. There is certainly nothing in the nature of the case to lead to the belief that such revelations would cease to occur. There is no rational, *a priori* basis for such a doctrine, and no scriptural warrant for it. We have sought in vain for a single expression in all the Scripture, from beginning to end, that contained a hint of any thing of the kind. We have never seen or heard any such testimony adduced; on the contrary, the Scriptures all along keep pointing forward in various ways to developments of fact and disclosures of truth which are yet to come. Daniel was told that the meaning of his vision could not then be made known to him, but that it should be opened or disclosed at the end of many ages. The Lord, in speaking to his disciples, referred to a time coming when he should no longer, as he did then, veil what he had to say in parable, or similitude, or figure, but in which the truth would be more plainly or definitely unfolded. The whole book of Revelation is a pointing forward to a period of more ample disclosure in regard to spiritual and divine things. The heavens are seen opening; the hitherto comparatively sealed book of God's word is seen by the apostle to be *one* of the things which were to be opened in that future into which he was then symbolically looking; the New Jerusalem was seen to descend — a descent by which it is declared that God should reveal himself more completely to men than ever before.

But without wearying your patience by a further enumeration of particulars, we may affirm that so far from the scriptural presumption being that such revelations are closed, there are frequent and positive predictions to the contrary — predictions which fully assure not only that there will be further disclosures of such truth, but that such truths will be known in much greater abundance than in all the times which are past.

Every presumption, therefore, both of reason and prophecy, is in favor of the supposition that some new divine revelation would be accorded to men about the present age of the world; and this general presumption will, we think, be very strongly confirmed in the mind of any person who will rationally examine the subject, and then look out around him upon the many and various signs of the times.

If, then, such a revelation is to be expected, it is also rationally to be presumed that that revelation, when it does come, will, among other things, make known to us the mysteries of another life. Inasmuch as the old revelation went on, from stage to stage, disclosing more and more definitely the truths concerning man's future existence, as the world was able to bear or receive them, closing in a vision which withdrew the veil from between the two worlds in a manner in which it had never been withdrawn before, may we not fairly expect, when the grand drama of heavenly seership again reopens, and a new scene is presented, that the other world and the other life will be still more fully laid open to view than ever before? We have every reason to suppose that the general order of progressive development will be maintained, and that the single door there opened into those heavenly spheres will be thrown still more widely apart, and men made more fully acquainted with the states and conditions of their inhabitants.

Such, consequently, is actually the case. The New Jerusalem revelation contains an opening of the conditions in which men live after they have passed out of the mortal body. It makes known the quality and the phenomena of the future state, and describes the vast but diverse populations that inhabit the world of spirits, the spheres of the evil, and the heavenly worlds of good spirits and angels.

And the writings containing these accounts are not made up of romantic sketches, are not vague, dreamy, highly imaginative, or poetic pictures, to suit the appetite of a wandering fancy, as many are induced to believe, but consist of simple, clear, concise, prosaic descriptions of facts conveyed with the minute accuracy of phrase suited to scientific statements, of compact logical trains of thought, of lucid expositions of philosophical principles, and of rational unfoldings of organic laws.

Another idea which is very frequently expressed in the religious literature of the day, and which may therefore lie in the minds of some as an objection to the truth of this kind of revelation, is, that because nothing definite concerning the mode of the future state of existence has been made known in the literal sense of the Old and New Testaments, therefore such knowledge never will be made known, is not in itself to be desired, and if known would only minister to an idle curiosity, and never be of use to mankind. And by maintaining and repeating a doctrine like this it is now sought to forestall and repress all rational inquiry into the subject.

Nothing can be more fallacious than an allegation and an inference of this kind. If it be the mark of a noble and manly mind to feel and manifest an interest in the great question of its own immortality, it must surely be a matter of equal dignity and importance to inquire rationally as to the mode and conditions of that existence. If a desire for a *little* knowledge on the subject be a commendable quality, then certainly a desire for rational, clear, definite, and full knowledge in regard to it must be more commendable still; and it will be found, as a general rule, that the more real interest a person feels in his own future existence, the stronger will be his desire to acquire and form some definite and rational conceptions concerning the manner, state, and conditions of that existence. A knowledge concerning the other world is a highly desirable and proper kind of knowledge. When exhibited in connection with the principles of genuine religion, and used as it may and is intended to be, to show man his true destiny, and how he may avoid misery and how best attain to eternal happiness in that world, it becomes the most valuable kind of knowledge of which it is possible for the mind of man to conceive — a knowledge which the Lord in times past has not been striving to *conceal* from his creatures, but which, on the other hand, he has been constantly endeavoring to prepare them for, that he might communicate it. Through a long series of dispensations he has been gradually leading them on to desire and ask for more of it, mysteriously lifting the veil now and then, giving here and there a glimpse of the wonders which are behind it, so as to attract attention to the subject, to arouse curiosity, invite investigation, and stimulate rational inquiry. "*Prove me now herewith, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there be not room enough to receive it,*" has always been the language of the Lord of Hosts, both in his word and in his providence. But men have been so fully absorbed in their own worldly interests and affairs that they could not have their minds so lifted above them as to render such knowledge of any spiritual benefit to them. They have been too dim of sight and too dull of hearing heretofore for the further revelation of these matters. If they sought intercourse with the beings of the other world in ages past, it was not to gather spiritual instruction, or to learn how they might live better moral lives, but only to know the result of a coming battle or journey, how to succeed in some petty quarrel, or to make some other inquiry in regard to their merely selfish and worldly affairs. But now, after three or four thousand years of training and development, a different state has been prepared with some, and the rational mind of many of the race is just beginning to ask those momentous questions in regard to the realities of the future life which it ought to have asked, and which it has been solicited to ask in a proper manner ages and ages ago. And here is the divine revelation, already in the world, accorded beforehand, to answer the question, to meet the coming want, to shed the needed light, to supply the incipient demand.

We hold, therefore, that the prevalent desire which is now being manifested by multitudes of people to make inquiry concerning the spiritual world, to learn the state of the departed, to know in what manner their friends who have gone from earth continue to live in that other life, to what extent they are still aware of the things which are transpiring here, and how far they can or are willing to communicate their present knowledge to the inhabitants of earth, is a rational and proper desire — a desire calculated in the long run gradually to elevate the human mind, and turn its attention more decidedly to the themes connected with our immortality. And we regard the spiritual manifestations of the day as subserving in this respect a highly important set of uses. They are *one* of the loudest utterances of the many-voiced present, not only indicating some of the spiritual wants of the age, but also as legibly writing out one of the providential means by which those wants are to be supplied. So wide spread a communication from the spiritual to the natural world as has taken place within the last five years has not been permitted to accomplish itself except for some wise and benevolent purpose, and with some definite and important bearing on the future interests of humanity.

Since the execution of the last general judgment in the world of spirits, in the year 1757, and the consequent commencement of a new dispensation, a new order of things has been gradually introduced into all the arrangements of the spiritual world. The societies of diabolical spirits were then removed from the world of spirits, and a new order of heavenly societies were formed from among the good. The world of spirits has since been filling up with a new population. The intensely profane and evil are not now allowed to remain so long, and to accumulate there in permanent societies as they formerly did, and the general state of its inhabitants is now one of perpetual flux and change. The new heavens or the new heavenly societies which were formed at the time of the last judgment are brought down nearer to men than the former heavens were; and there is a general and strong desire on the part of the good inhabitants of the spiritual worlds to communicate the good things and true things of their state to men.

The truth is that the Lord is at this day rapidly preparing affairs, both in the other world and in this, for the successive accomplishment of the great and glorious things of prophecy; for hastening on the time when the waste places of the earth shall become joyous and glad, when the desert shall blossom as the rose, and when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together. The world is about entering upon the earlier stages of a new great epoch in universal history, in which humanity is going to achieve that grander destiny and development which has for so many ages been alike the dream of the poet, the vision of the inspired seer, and the rational hope of the philosopher and the sage. And that destiny is not to be simply a secular or *merely* worldly one. The mainsprings of its movement are to be moral forces. It will be deeply and intimately connected with the *church* of the race, with the *spiritual* interests of the human soul, and will grow out of a new opening and expansion of man's religious life.

Now with this great thought — the grand idea of this new and more glorious dispensation — the crown and diadem of all the dispensations that have gone before it — the whole spiritual world is swelling and pregnant. There is an intense desire felt on their part to communicate the thought, and to help forward the movement. The spiritual world is as it were every where pressing down upon this world in order to be received and acknowledged. It seeks to inspire the minds of men here with a belief in the realities, the substantialities, and the *nearness* of that world and of that life.

But men for the most part are so slow to believe these things, are so prone and content to plod on in the care and thought of their worldly occupations and interests, that they are not ready to seek a knowledge of these things of their own accord, or without the stimulus of some present and powerful motive. The reception of the full, clear, and rational revelation of these things made in the divine providence of the Lord, one hundred years ago, has been comparatively slow and gradual. The age requires some striking and extraordinary display to arrest its attention, to excite its curiosity, and to lead it to an attentive and careful investigation of the whole subject.

Hence it is that these modern manifestations from the spiritual world have come. They are here to testify to men concerning the fact of a real spiritual world; they are here to testify to them concerning the fact of the commencement of a new dispensation, and the strong desire which the spiritual world has to communicate itself. They are so many witnesses to the general truths of the New Church. Perhaps it may be said with a proper limitation, that they come in this age for the New Church, instead of the miracles of the former dispensations, to afford to that class of minds which requires that kind of testimony, a tangible and palpable proof of spiritual beings and spiritual things. They are to a certain extent, and in a certain sense, an opening to, and a forerunner of, the New Jerusalem of the future. A state of things has arrived at the present day in regard to these truths, somewhat similar to that which was expressed by our Lord when he was riding into Jerusalem on the ass's colt. Speaking of the men, women, and children who were running beside him and singing Hosanna to the Son of David, he said, *If these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out.* The idea is, that the truth *pressed in with such power* to be made known, that it *must* obtain an utterance somewhere; that it was impossible but that it should attract to itself mediums through whom it could get articulation and voice. And so it is again at this day. These great pregnant truths, of such vast importance to the human race, and having so direct a bearing upon man's eternal interests, are pressing in with unparalleled power from the other world, and are striving to make themselves known. They flow in in some form or other, under one modification or another, through every crevice or door that is opened from the spiritual world; and where none is already ajar they strive to open one. Thus they are every where raising up to themselves living and audible witnesses of all kinds, and of every grade and degree; and are making use of all the means in their power to gain for themselves the sight and the hearing of men. If the scribes and the chief priests and elders of the prevailing church will not give them a reception and an utterance, why, then, the very crowds in the streets must perforce lift up their voices.

Hence we are willing to maintain, not only that these demonstrations have been permitted for good, but that they have already been productive *of* good. Multitudes of well-disposed and enlightened spirits have no doubt thus communicated. They have disclosed to their own friends and to the public mind of the world important facts of which it was not before aware. They have brought home to the convictions and the hearts of many people the spiritual world and its inhabitants, and the future life of man, in a sensible and realizable manner, as the whole church of the past has never been able to do. And they have given forth many instructions correct in science, elevated in moral sentiment, calculated to improve the characters of men, and to render them more thoughtful, and wiser, and better.

But with all this standing out prominently from the canvas as one side of the picture, it must not be omitted or forgotten that the subject presents also another and a very different side. We are content to put the inquiry to those most familiar with the matter, and therefore the best qualified to judge, whether there is not constantly being received from the same general source much that is evil and many things that are false; whether, after all, beyond a few general facts in regard to the resurrection of the spirit, and its immediate entrance into eternal life, with the mode in which men first live there, the communications are not, in a very great majority of cases, merely petty and frivolous conversations, absurd or ridiculous instructions, deceitful and fraudulent allegations, vapid and incoherent fancies, or high-flown, swelling, and bombastic deliverances, of vast pretension, but of weak substance or fulfilment; keeping, like Macbeth's witches, the word of promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope; in many cases exercising a very pernicious and injurious influence upon men — taking away their proper and useful interest in the common affairs of life, turning them aside from their daily avocations and duties, intoxicating their minds with a species of unwholesome enthusiasm or fervor, lifting them off their intellectual feet, and carrying them about on the mock wings of a fallacious and spurious inspiration; substituting often, in place of their own rationality, the lead and direction of spirits not half so wise, perhaps, or well developed as themselves; and whose company, could they but be brought *visibly* face to face with them, they would no longer be in a desire to keep; and filling the insane asylums all through the land with the victims of a new kind of mania.*

Now this latter class of facts connected with these phenomena must not be hastily passed over or pushed out of view. They form an integrant and inevitable element in this kind of manifestation; and something which must always go along with it, helping to modify its character, and tending to impart to it a general and permanent quality.

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* We allow this latter allusion to stand as it is, because it is fully sustained by the facts of the case. Nevertheless, it ought in justice to be remarked in this connection, that the production of insanity is not a very distinguishing mark of the spiritual manifestations. Men are likewise continually being rendered insane by various religious excitements, as well as by close application to study, and unremitted attention to mercantile business in our large cities.

And how, we ask, is it possible that it should be otherwise, when we consider the mixed and variable character of the population of the world of spirits, where all go when they first depart from natural body, and the place from which these communications come? Multitudes of abandoned and evil men are there, wandering about through that world, wishing and determined to counteract any beneficial influences which good spirits may strive to exert upon the minds of men, and to overthrow any good results which are likely to be built up here in consequence. And we must keep it constantly in mind that in very many cases, men who were evil in disposition here become far more evil in action there; for in that world, after a while, all outward restraints upon the conduct of men are withdrawn, and the spirit then behaves just as wickedly as his secret inclinations prompt him to.

We are not conscious of the least disposition to underrate or undervalue the character and results of modern spiritualism, as our remarks may already to some extent have served to show. It is our continual desire to arrive at a full and just estimate both of the present merits and prospective influence of a demonstration evidently growing out of the causes of the new dispensation, and intimately connected with it. We would also accord sincerity and purity of motive to those earnest and honest minds who are endeavoring to seek the truth through that channel. But when examined in all its facts and features, and viewed from the stand-point of the New Church, it can by no means be regarded as the final movement of this new age. It makes known no new thing to the student of New Church theology, except as confirming general principles therein disclosed. It may possibly turn out to be in the world of theology and religion what the French revolution was in the world of political institutions, — a breaker up and tearer down of mouldering forms and decaying systems of the past; thus perhaps performing a highly important and even necessary preliminary work, — but is of itself far too chaotic, fragmentary, variable, and contradictory in its elements to constitute or to contribute the positive, organizing, and reconstructive principle of the future.

That principle is to be found in a CHURCH suited to the epoch; a church in a great measure new and distinct from preceding ones; possessing and based upon a centralized, complete, self-consistent, and logically harmonious system of revealed doctrines; disclosing all the required truths in regard to the other world, the modes of life there, and man's eternal destiny; and coming down from a point far above man, and far above the world of spirits.

The necessity for some such revealed standard, acting as a test to which to bring all the variant and conflicting teachings now flowing in from the other world and springing up in this, must we think become apparent, as the subject is contemplated in the full light of history and of fact.

With these preliminary observations therefore, going, as we conceive, to evince an antecedent probability that there would at this day be accorded a new divine revelation, we are prepared to advance to the more specific question, — *Why are the revelations made through Swedenborg entitled to more implicit belief, or worthy of greater credit, than are the communica-*

tions received through the spiritual mediums of the day?

As this is the great question between the New Church and modern spiritualism, we are not unwilling to devote some attention to it. We shall have space on the present occasion only to open the subject, and lay out the general ground; it is therefore our design to follow it up at a future time with a fuller adduction of reasons and considerations.

1. The first point to which we shall invite attention is *the difference of claim set up by the two systems.* This difference is apparent upon the very face of the two. The system of Swedenborg sets out with the averment that it is a divine revelation, and this asseveration it constantly carries with it throughout its entire length and breadth. Spiritualism, on the other hand, makes no such claim. It professes to be, and from the very nature of the case must of necessity be, a set of variable miscellaneous communications received from departed spirits, human and fallible like ourselves, and capable of giving forth only their own views and opinions. They tell you from the first that they are some departed brother, father, or other relative, or some neighbor, friend, or acquaintance; or, where this is not the case, some other person of whom you have heard, or who, at any rate, not many years ago lived here in the world — men, women, and children like ourselves. All they can testify to are the *facts which have come under their own personal observation since they have been in the world of spirits;* and can tell nothing concerning the *higher* or *lower* spheres of spiritual existence, except from hearsay or conjecture; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred

they tell you so. The very best and most intelligent communications that are received — those professing to come from Bacon and Franklin, or other eminent statesmen and philosophers — distinctly disclaim for themselves any superior illumination, plainly assert that knowledge is gained in that world, as it is in this, by patient study and investigation. The best informed and most reliable spirits say in their communications that all the higher orders and degrees of truth are matters of speculation and opinion among *them* as among us, and distinctly state that what they give they give *as* opinions, and call upon men to exercise their own rationality in deciding upon them. Thus we see that so far as concerns the question of being a divinely authorized or infallibly reliable revelation of high theological truth, spiritualism is *nonsuited* before it even comes into court, and cannot be brought to trial before the same bench that is to pass judgment on the system of the New Church. By its own universal confession it eschews all divine claims, and voluntarily places itself in the ranks of miscellaneous communications from the spiritual world.

Now, contrast this with the claims of Swedenborg. It is a current and prevailing misconception in regard to Swedenborg's case that he received his communications from spirits and angels. Because his spiritual senses were open and he held continual intercourse with the inhabitants of the other world, it is therefore supposed and presumed by most persons but little acquainted with the subject that what he gave forth was *received* from spirits and angels, and that his published writings contain the doctrines and sentiments which were thus taught him by them. But this is altogether an *erroneous impression,* and one therefore which requires most emphatic correction in this place. His distinct affirmation is, in regard to the system of doctrines which he has given to the world, that he did not receive them even from any *angel,* much less from any *spirit,* but only from the Lord alone. Angels were often used (as well they might be) as mediums to impart to him useful instructions, to unfold and illustrate for him some doctrine of divine truth, and communicate to him their ideas of it; but the *authority* for the truths themselves is derived from the Lord through the *Word.*

This is a proposition so important to be understood and borne in mind that we will give at least one statement of it in his own words. In the last work he wrote and published, and in which is contained the Universal Theology* of the New Church, he says: — "That the Lord has manifested himself before me, his servant, and sent me on this office, and that, after this, he opened the sight of my spirit, and thus let me into the spiritual world, and gave to see the heavens and the hells, and also to speak with angels and spirits, and this now for many years, I testify in truth; and also that, from the first day of my call to this office, I have never received any thing appertaining to the doctrines of that church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I read the Word. To the end that the Lord might be constantly present, he revealed to me the spiritual sense of his Word, in which sense divine truth is in its light; and in this light he is continually present." — *True Christian Religion,* 779, 780.

Assertions to this effect he repeatedly makes in letters to his friends, and in various parts of his writings; it is his constant claim for thirty years, from the commencement to the close of his mission. In his letter to the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, who had inquired of him in relation to the subject, he says that the Lord, unconsciously to *him*, had prepared him for the office from his infancy upward; and that this favor was not shown to him on account of any merits of his own, but for the sake of the New Church, and the great concern of all Christians' salvation and happiness.

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* Called also the *True Christian Religion.*

For twenty-seven years he enjoyed uninterrupted open intercourse with the other world; during which time, as he himself states, he met and conversed with angels from all three of the heavens, with evil spirits from all three of the hells, with spirits from every part of the world of spirits; with many who had lived on different planets in our solar system, and on other worlds beyond our solar system — in all to the number of many thousands. And in a great many cases he reports the conversations which he had with them; he tells what he saw in their places of abode; he relates what he learned from them in regard to their own character, history, and present opinions; he makes a record of their views and beliefs on a great variety of subjects — philosophical, religious, and moral. But what he gets from a spirit he reports as coming from a spirit, and what he hears among the angels he relates as coming from the angels. He simply reports them over, as matters of fact, for what they are worth, never intimating that such views are to be received as divine or infallibly reliable truths; and communications so received form no part of the

New Church system of doctrines.* That system was taught him solely by the Lord, from the Word; and he repeatedly affirms that it was not permitted him to incorporate into it any thing coming from any other source, averring that so many and so strongly confirmed persuasions of what is false exist in the spiritual world, unless he had been continually guarded by the Lord against being influenced by spirits, and against adopting any thing from them as doctrine, it could not have been otherwise than that his revelation would have been full of errors. What might have come from spirits would have been filled and mingled with falsities, and what might have come even from angels would have contained various fallacies and misconceptions or partial and erroneous impressions of truth, wanting in adaptation to the universal spiritual needs of mankind.

From the tenor of these statements it will be perceived that a very grave distinction is to be observed between the revelations of the New Jerusalem and ordinary communications from the other world. Swedenborg was not in any sense merely a clairvoyant or spiritualistic medium. He received his doctrinal teachings from none of the "seven spheres" or "circles" in the other life. Tried, therefore, by their own claims merely, and with equal liberality granting to each system the character which it demands for itself, a wide chasm is found to exist between them. It will be seen that while on the one hand *spiritualism,* as a matter of course, falls of its own accord into that series of disclosures from the other world which we have all along denominated *miscellaneous communications*, so, on the other hand, the system of the New Church does, in like manner, just as naturally and as really fall into the category of divine revelations, and Swedenborg as obviously takes his place in the line of commissioned apostles and prophets and seers.

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* Though they *are* regarded by New Churchmen as reliable disclosures of fact, and of facts calculated to throw important lights over the laws and principles of divine truth.

With this marking off of separate position we shall be prepared to go forward in a subsequent lecture and adduce some of the reasons which serve to substantiate this diversity of claim.

LECTURE IV.

WHY ARE THE DISCLOSURES OF SWEDENBORG OF MORE AUTHORITY THAN THOSE OF SPIRITUALISM?

"And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go." — 1 *Sam.* ix. 6.

At the conclusion of our last lecture we promised to bring forward some of the reasons which induce us to prefer the revelations made through Swedenborg to those coming through spiritualism. It is our design, therefore, to proceed now and present a few considerations which seem to us to render his statements more reliable than those of spiritual mediums, and to inspire a superior degree of confidence in the genuine truthfulness of his revelations.

These proofs will be altogether internal, based upon the intrinsic characteristics of the revelations themselves, and the relations they bear to other systems of known or acknowledged truth. They will be addressed to the reason, or more properly, perhaps, to that purer rationality of the mind which is a perceptive faculty, by whose use we *see*, as it were, the intrinsic truth or falsity of a proposition, whose exercise involves a moral quality, and which is in itself the highest power of the understanding.

1. The first consideration to which we shall refer is that of the claim itself. This was in part alluded to in our last discourse; but we desire to recall attention to it for a few moments, with a view of revolving it in a new light. The revelator himself declares that he received the doctrines from the Lord alone; and appends the extraordinary statement that he *was not permitted* to send forth any thing as doctrine that might be taught him by spirits, not even by heavenly spirits, nor yet by the angels themselves; giving as a reason for this that revelations coming even from good spirits are not reliable, and those from angels do not possess the authority of divine truth.

When we consider the ideas most commonly prevalent concerning the invisible world, with what awe any communications from it are usually received, with how much confidence *any* statements coming from a supernatural source are apt to be regarded as of divine authority, — when we reflect that to most minds the bare assurance that a doctrine was delivered by a being from the other world would be a sufficient guaranty for believing it, and when we observe how much reliance is now placed on the statements of disimbodied spirits, and how readily many of their commands are obeyed, merely because they come from spirits, — the above assertions made by Swedenborg are truly remarkable. Had he been an impostor it never would have occurred to him to set up the peculiar claim he has, and to couple it with such reasons. To whom was it before known among men that a revelation from angels was not sufficiently reliable to be received as infallible doctrine? What impostor would not have supposed that if his revelation came from the supernatural world at all, it would be of sufficient authority?

We regard this statement of Swedenborg, then, connected with the accounts which he gives concerning the life of spirits, their capacity of communicating with men, their want of reliability when they do communicate, and viewed in the light and confirmation of modern facts and experiences, as something worthy of arresting our attention. And when we go further, and look around upon what is taking place about us — observing the broad fact that spiritualism does every where base itself upon miscellaneous communications received not even from angels, but from spirits of lower grade, and of every imaginable character or quality — the circumstance, we say, that a revelator so long ago should have had sufficient insight imparted to him to make so vital a distinction, is *prima facie* evidence in favor of his truthfulness. The superiority of his claim creates an antecedent probability of the superiority of his mission, and affords at least a very strong *presumption* in favor of his revelation.

2. The second consideration which we shall adduce is the fact that Swedenborg was a seer. This is a proposition generally acknowledged by spiritualism, and does not, therefore, require to be proven. Nearly all the receivers of the spiritualistic doctrines, if not all, freely admit that he had that kind of intercourse with spirits which he describes, and that his communications with them extended beyond those of almost any other person of whom we have a record; and nearly all the spirits who it is said communicate through the modern mediums constantly aver that he had the open intercourse with those of the other life that he

claims for himself, and that he had a far greater knowledge concerning their world and its inhabitants than any man who ever lived. The idea that he was gifted with extraordinary spiritual powers of some kind is also beginning to gain currency in circles beyond the precincts of spiritualism and the New Church.

Let us look at the consequences which this fact of seership carries with it.

His eyes were open. All his spiritual senses were open, and in full activity and exercise. He could look out directly upon the scenes of the world of spirits as we can look forth upon the scenes of this world. He could see whatever was taking place there. He needed not that any spirit should come and tell him that spirits are in the human form, — to tell him that men rise immediately after death — how they look and in what condition they find themselves after the natural body has been thrown aside — how that world appears — how spirits live, and what they are in the habit of doing, — for all these things he could see and observe for himself. He enjoyed every means of obtaining information concerning that world and that life that they themselves enjoyed. He was as familiar with the laws and phenomena of that world, and with the state of things there, as we are with the laws and phenomena of this world, and of the state of things here.

Contrast this condition of his with that of the spiritual mediums. They are perfectly in the dark as regards every thing pertaining to the other world. Not a single circumstance do they know by their own observation. They are entirely dependent upon others for what they receive, and have no means at hand by which to correct the reports.* Most of them have not sufficient knowledge concerning the other life to understand correctly the impressions made upon them, or to translate correctly the meaning of the messages communicated through them, or to understand intelligently the phenomena connected with it.

When a spirit approached Swedenborg, he *saw* him, could observe his appearance, his manners, could perceive something of his quality, and form an idea of his character, as men here can by observation know who it is with whom they are holding intercourse, or form some estimate of character from manners and appearance, if they do not know them.

Not so with the mediums. They have no sensible perception of the person with whom they are communicating. The spirit can assume to be any body he chooses; can sustain, for the time, any character he likes, and can tell any kind of story he pleases, still remaining beyond their power of detection.

Swedenborg enjoyed open intercourse with the spiritual world nearly thirty years; he was, besides, a man of extraordinary intellectual endowments. He possessed great philosophical acumen, with almost unparalleled scientific attainments. Reflect a moment upon the advantages which such a man would possess for acquiring information and forming correct ideas. We all know how it is in this world. A man of little reading, and possessing a low order of talent, may go to Europe and return scarcely a whit wiser than he went; while another, of large capacity and extensive erudition, will astonish us with the extent and accuracy of his observations, and with the amount of reliable knowledge and new information he brings home. So would it be with a man like Swedenborg in the spiritual world. He enjoyed all the privileges in this respect of a permanent resident there; and with the laws of mind before us we can see how intrinsically superior his acquisition of accurate knowledge would be, not only to all merely spiritualistic *mediums*, but even to that of most spirits themselves. There certainly cannot be more than one person in a hundred millions so endowed and capacitated to acquire knowledge by familiar intercourse with the spiritual world as he was. And it is not too much to say, then, that intelligent spirits who have passed out of the body from among us, and have been in that world five, ten, fifteen, twenty, or even twenty-five years, would not possess the qualifications for communicating to us abundant and correct information concerning that world and that life that Swedenborg possesses; while the great mass of spirits—those of common mind and common attainments, with little curiosity or inquiry—might remain in that world age after age and century after century without ever acquiring a tithe of his knowledge of the subject. For twenty-seven years he made the facts or phenomena, the laws and principles, of the other state of existence matter of laborious study, of scientific observation, and of philosophical deduction.

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* The few instances in which some spiritualists aver that they have seen spirits, or a naked hand, do not seem to us sufficiently important to modify the language of our general statement.

Supposing, therefore, that Swedenborg had no special commission of a divine kind, and placing the plea for his reliability merely upon his qualities as a man and his opportunities as a seër, we must at once pronounce his disclosures to have a claim upon our confidence superior to those of any spiritualist medium, ancient or modern, of which we have any account.

3. The third consideration, to which we now advance, is that the revelations of Swedenborg constitute a system.

It is hardly necessary that we allude to the fact that spiritualism is fragmentary and variable in the matter of its disclosures. While it is not denied that some important and sublime truths have been and are being so communicated, it is just as clear that many pernicious errors have gained admittance through the same door; that the contents of the revelations are discordant and heterogeneous. The different parts are not in agreement with each other. Besides the extreme frivolousness of most of the communications, there are grave discrepancies in regard to higher themes of disclosure. One class of mediums will contradict another class on important points of spiritual belief; and doctrines are taught through them coming from every point of the theological compass. How can communications coming in this manner and possessing these characteristics be reliable witnesses in relation to the higher subjects of human thought?

With the writings of Swedenborg the case is different. His revelations form one compact and homogeneous system. All the different parts are nicely adjusted to each other, and all fall harmoniously into their several places. There is not only a simple logical consistency between them, but a kind of *living coherency* running through them all, binding them into a single organic whole. No fact or doctrine is here found but is needed to fill an important place in this complete body; and no place in the circle of thought is left without its appropriate teaching of principles and facts. Every part is integral to every other part; and the whole solves all the questions of philosophy, and solves them in harmony with each other. It addresses itself to the reason, and the reason can decide, by examining its contents, as to the rationality and truth of the system.

4. The fourth consideration to which we advert is the *relative extent of his disclosures.*

Spiritualism really tells us very little about the other world and its inhabitants, about the modes of life there and the laws of that state of being, when compared to the amount of information given on the subject in the writings of Swedenborg. The disclosures coming through the *mediums* contain things so new to most people, and giving, as they do, some light on subjects upon which such entire ignorance generally prevails, it is not at all remarkable that they should strike the minds of multitudes with considerable amazement. The contrast between what was before popularly known concerning the other life and that which is now made known through spiritualism is very great indeed. We have no wish to under estimate the addition of knowledge that has been made in this respect. Still, we feel bound to state it as a fact, which may be verified by examination, that the contrast between the knowledge that may be gained on these subjects from spiritualism (supposing all its disclosures to be true) and that which may be found in the New Church writings is very much greater than that between spiritualism and the rest of the world. The two will hardly bear comparison together, so great a preponderance is there of light and knowledge in favor of the New Church system.

Only look a moment at the facts of the case. About one half the theological writings which Swedenborg has left are devoted to themes connected with the spiritual world. His disclosures on these subjects alone, therefore, comprise nearly fifteen closely-printed octavo volumes. Add to this that throughout these there is very little indeed, if any, repetition. No time is lost and no space thrown away in eloquent rhetoric or abstract speculations. The style is every where simple, clear, direct, concise. Every paragraph is made to communicate a fact or evolve a principle. All his memorable relations, and every conversation with a spirit which he records, is introduced only to illustrate some law or bring to light some fresh phenomenon of that state of existence. He had too much to do in one short lifetime, too much knowledge to communicate, and too many important truths to write out for the future use of men, either to trifle with his readers, to loiter at his task, or to perform any portion of it twice over. Hence the slowness with which his system is received. It is on account of its vastness. Not that he discloses so little, but because he communicates so much; because he takes the human mind so far away from the common routine of thought, and lifts it so high into the upper regions of rational and spiritual truth. It is not a collection of pleasing fancies which may be intellectually played with, but a system of solid truths that must be understandingly acquired. In the mastery of it you mount from fact to fact and from principle to principle, as in the study of a fully developed and well ordered science. It is like the science of astronomy, in which every new fact gained fills with further particulars a previous idea, or extends the horizon of the mind in a wider circle. Every step taken in it is a real advance; every page read and retained is a definite addition to the stores of our positive knowledge. It contains not only a complete geography, so to speak, of the invisible world, but also a general account of the different classes of its inhabitants, with a comprehensive statement of its constitution and laws.

It takes man from the moment he enters the other life, and traces him through all the changes, phases, and developments in the line of his destiny, until he arrives at his final and permanent abode. When the body descends into the grave, Swedenborg passes beyond that gate, and follows the departing spirit. He tells us of the form, appearance, and functions of the spirit's body. He describes, minutely enough for our information, the world into which the spirit comes; the state of life in which he then is; and how he is associated with the people whom he finds there. He gives an account of the great populations that reside in that part of the world of spirits into which all spirits first go, and which constitutes the first state after death; shows us how the different nations and peoples of the Christian world are situated there with respect to each other; how the Mohammedans are situated, and how the pagan or Gentile communities there appear. Not only are all the different populations which go thither from this earth described, but we learn also of the men who come into that world from the other planets. Nor are we confined to the limits of our own solar system in this respect, but our minds are carried beyond our own system into the sidereal worlds, and enough made known to show us that the planets of other constellations are inhabited, and that they too are daily sending forward their myriads of spirits into the other life.

And all this is in regard to the *first state* into which men go after death — the very first entrance or vestibule of the spiritual world. It is from this first state in the world of spirits that all the disclosures of spiritualism undoubtedly come. The familiar spirits, or those who communicate through mediums, are persons who are still living in that mere vestibule of the other world.* And the account which Swedenborg gives of that state is in general agreement with what these communicating spirits make known concerning the world in which they are. From his descriptions of it, and his statements in regard to the condition of things which exists there, we should expect just such developments and disclosures to take place should a communication be opened between its inhabitants and people in this world, as we now find revealed through spiritualism.

It is a world in which there is much magnificence and beauty; a state of existence which is an advance upon our present condition; a world of greater freedom, and in which many new opportunities are open to the expanding and developing mind. Persons on entering that world are usually seized with a degree of exhilaration and delight from the circumstance of finding themselves still so completely alive, and at the prospect which is opened up before them of an endless existence without any more death.

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* The *manifestations* are all from that state, although they may at times come from spirits who have passed beyond it; for the spirits who have passed beyond come back into it in order to communicate. Thus, should there a manifestation be given from an evil spirit of one of the hells, it would be because he had for the time being come up out of his own evil society into the world of spirits. We assume, however, in these lectures, that a *majority* of these manifestations come from persons recently dead, and who, consequently, have not yet passed into any of the other states.

Moreover, it is a state in which men are still in the life of their exteriors, when they appear much the same that they did before they left us. Their *interiors* are not yet necessarily revealed, and the wicked may, if they choose, put on a seemly and generally becoming external behavior. Hence the common impression which at first flows in from that world that there are no *evil spirits* ; that every thing is progress ; and that that progress is all in the right direction. This would naturally be the appearance things would wear in that first state ; for men are continually passing out of that sphere or state into the next beyond, just as they are continually passing out of our world into the next. Their communities are in a perpetual flow and transformation by the reception of new individuals from this world, and, after their residence there for a number of years, their transfer to the next state, just as our communities here are in a perpetual flux and change from the continual births of new individuals, and continual deaths.

And because men there are all free, and all develop themselves in precisely the manner which they prefer, it cannot but be, as a general thing, a happy state of existence to those who are in it. And as all pass out of it in the direction they choose, each one pursuing that line of development most congenial to his tastes, it is natural enough that there should seem to be one great law of eternal progression holding sway over all classes of mind alike.

But reflect a moment upon how limited a portion of the spiritual world that is from which these communications come. It is only the merest vestibule of that immeasurable temple which lies beyond. Hence it is that in these communications we hear so little about any of the subsequent states into which spirits pass; that we get nothing but opinions or conjectures concerning the spheres that lie beyond; that we hear so little concerning the second state, so much less concerning the third state, and nothing at all, scarcely, of those eternal abodes where, on the one hand, the myriads of the blessed are arranged in three vast expanses rising one above the other, and on the other hand the universal congregations of an opposite kind recede, one behind the other, downward into the realms of everlasting darkness.

Hence, too, it is that we hear so little in these communications concerning the higher truths of religion; so little definite doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ; of the glorification of his humanity, of his divine work of redemption, of the spiritual sense of the sacred Scripture, of the science of correspondences, of hereditary evil, and of the spiritual regeneration of man.

Now, in contrast with this, consider the revelations of Swedenborg in respect to these things. He does not stop with you at the portico of the temple, and after describing to you the scenes there, straightway leave you to your own conjectures. He conducts us within the building; he leads us slowly through its long-drawn aisles, through its transepts, its chancels, and its choirs; he points us to the great crowd of worshippers assembled about the altar, and shows us, also, what is going on at the various shrines in the nooks and corners; he lifts now and then a marble slab from the pavement, that we may perceive the smoke which rises up from beneath, and get an occasional glance into the donjon keeps and charnel houses below; and then bids us lift our eyes to the serial galleries where the white-robed bands are chanting the high praises of God and of the Lamb, or points them still upward to the immensity of the vaulted roof and the measureless concave of that illimitable dome.

He describes to us the second and third states of spirits as well as the first; he tells us of the heavens as well as concerning the world of spirits; he describes the three distinct degrees or worlds into which they are divided as he does the three degrees of development which attend a progress through the world of spirits. And he is as comprehensive and as satisfactory in the information he conveys concerning the successive communities of the evil as he is concerning the ascending societies of the good.

In his disclosures the entire spiritual universe is distinctly mapped out; all its different parts are brought fairly into view; not one of them is left out, or pushed aside, or neglected, or hurriedly and superficially passed over. The distance to which all these extend beyond the outermost confines of spiritualism is, at a moderate estimation, as ten to one. A person has only to take up a volume of Swedenborg's, as, for instance, the work on Heaven and Hell, and read with considerate attention the table of its contents, to perceive the superior extent and comprehensiveness of the knowledge he undertakes to communicate. Let him carefully contemplate the amplitude of the ground there laid out before him, the philosophical mode in which the subjects are treated, the rich variety of topics that are discussed, and the logical order in which they are introduced; let him observe the great number of important principles that are announced, with the fulness of light and illustration that attend their development; and then let him pass in like manner to his other works, and to the Memorable Relations, and he must, we think, rise from the perusal impressed with a conviction that nothing else in human literature can be compared to them; and that in them we are introduced to a wider, more thorough, more definite and complete account of the invisible communities than in all the other books that have ever been written put together, or than has elsewhere entered into the heart of man to conceive could ever be given in human language. We conclude, therefore, that the fact that Swedenborg communicates to us so much larger an amount of information concerning the other life is another important reason why we should receive his revelations in preference to those of spiritualism, and a fact, too, which, as his works succeed in inviting that fulness of study which they deserve, will insure for him a general reception among rational and religious minds.

5. The fifth thought which we shall proceed to suggest is, that *the revelations of Swedenborg completely forestall, overlook, and account for the phenomena of spiritualism.*

This claim might be extended farther. With equal propriety it might be announced that the facts and principles brought to light in his writings clear up and explain all the great questions of pneumatology. They afford us a scientific clew to all similar phenomena in past times, and unlock the principal mysteries of the ancient magic — black and white — with all the modes of an improper spiritual intercourse and influence, as well as all those cases of spiritual vision which were of an orderly kind. In short, his system of disclosures gives us an insight into all the circumstances of a spiritual state of existence, of the relations of that state to our present one, of the connections between that world and this world, of the operations of persons in that world upon persons in this world, and of the connection of the spirit with the body.

But let us see in what manner the phenomena of spiritualism are forestalled in his writings. This can only be accomplished by giving a few extracts.

These selections must of course waive all reference to that part of the subject in which are taught the truths relative to man's being all the time in the midst of spirits, and confine themselves to those phenomena peculiar to the modern manifestations.

I. *Concerning the Discourse of Spirits with Man.*

"It is believed by many that man may be taught of the Lord by spirits speaking with him; but they who believe this, and are willing to believe it, do not know that it is connected with danger to their souls. Man, so long as he lives in the world, is in the midst of spirits as to his spirit; and yet spirits do not know that they are with man, nor doth man know that he is with spirits; the reason is, because they are conjoined as to the affections of the will immediately, and as to the thoughts of the understanding mediately; for man thinks naturally, but spirits spiritually; and natural and spiritual thought do not otherwise make one than by correspondences; a union by correspondences causes that one doth not know any thing concerning the other. But as soon as spirits begin to speak with man, they come out of their spiritual state into the natural state of man, and in this case they know that they are with man; and conjoin themselves with the thoughts of his affection, and from those thoughts speak with him; they cannot enter into any thing else, for similar affection and consequent thought conjoins all, and dissimilar separates. It is owing to this circumstance that the speaking spirit is in the same principles with the man to whom he speaks, whether they be true or false, and likewise that he excites them, and by his affection conjoined to the man's affection, strongly confirms them. Hence it is manifest that none other than similar spirits speak with man or manifestly operate upon him, for manifest operation coincides with speech. Hence it is that no other than enthusiastic spirits speak with enthusiasts; also that no other than Quaker spirits operate upon Quakers, and Moravian spirits upon Moravians; the case would be similar with Arians, with Socinians, and other heretics. All spirits speaking with man are no other than such as have been men in the world, and were then of such a quality; that this is the case hath been given me to know by repeated experience. And what is ridiculous, when man believes the Holy Spirit speaks with him, or operates upon him, the spirit also believes that he is the Holy Spirit. From these considerations, it is evident to what danger man is exposed who speaks with spirits, or who manifestly feels their operation. Man is ignorant of the quality of his own affection, whether it be good or evil, and with what other beings it is conjoined; and if he is in the conceit of his own intelligence, his attendant spirits favor every thought which is thence derived: in like manner, if any one is disposed to favor particular principles, enkindled by a certain fire, which hath place with those who are not in truths from genuine affection: when a spirit from similar affection favors man's thoughts or principles, then one leads the other, as the blind the blind, until both fall into the pit. The Pythonics formerly were of this description, and likewise the magicians in Egypt and in Babel, who by reason of discourse with spirits, and of the operation of spirits felt manifestly in themselves, were called wise: but by this the worship of God was converted into the worship of demons, and the church perished; wherefore such communications were forbidden the sons of Israel under penalty of death." — *Ap. Ex.* 1182.

With reference to this passage a recent writer * on the subject makes the following remarks: —

"The spiritual manifestations, so prevalent and increasing for the last few years, are of four general varieties, and may be known as mesmerism, with its clairvoyance, and as exhibited by rapping, writing, and speaking mediums. Besides these there are several varieties of sorcery, prevailing not so much of late as a few years ago, though occasionally seen yet among some enthusiastic sects, where the *power*, not of the Holy Spirit, but of enthusiastic and fanatical spirits, is very manifest. In these latter I refer to the jerks and dancings among the Quakers; the barkings, &c., of the so called great revival, in the beginning of the present century, in Kentucky; and the *fallings*, and shoutings, and strange experiences, occasional instances of which are still to be found, in out of the way places, among certain sects; very many of which I have witnessed, if not produced, at a time when I was as ignorant of their origin and character as those who now consider them the special operations of the Holy Spirit. We shall pass over all these latter named, under the general head of sorceries, with the remark that they are from enthusiastic and fanatical spirits, excited by, and in their turn exciting, those who, to a certain extent innocently, because ignorantly, believe them to be the Holy Spirit, and who, just as ignorantly, engage in a machinery of means unwittingly to practise sorcery upon a large scale."

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* Rev. J. R. Hibbard, of Chicago, in his recent work "Necromancy, or Pseudo-Spiritualism."

II. *Power of Spirits to communicate through writing and speaking Mediums.*

As Swedenborg was *let* into a great variety of spiritual states that he might describe them, he says, with respect to this kind of revelation from the other world, —

"The writing is so guided that not the least word can be written otherwise than it is. Sometimes, however, it is more insensible, sometimes so sensible that the finger is conducted in the writing by a higher power, so that if the attempt were made to write otherwise, it would be impossible; and this not only with an adjoined perception of the subject, but even, what has again and again happened to me, without this perception, so that I was ignorant of the series of things until after they were written; but this *only in very rare instances*, and *only for the sake of informing us that revelations are made in this manner.* Those papers [thus written] *were therefore destroyed,* because God Messiah was *unwilling that it should be* *so done.*" (*Adversaria*, 7167; *N. C. Repos.* vol. v. p. 467.) In another place he says, "Spirits who are the souls of those who are dead as to the body, if they were permitted, could, through the man who speaks with them, but not through others, be as though they were entirely in the world, and indeed, in a manner so manifest that they could *communicate their thoughts by words through another man, and even by letters,* for they have sometimes directed my hand when writing, as though it were entirely their own, so that they thought that it was they themselves who were writing; and if they were permitted they could write in their own peculiar style, which I know from some little experience; *but this is not permitted.*" — *S. D.* 557.

"Here, almost a hundred years before these writing and speaking mediums appear, the Lord has warned the church and the world against them, by letting his prepared servant be operated upon in the same way, and then commanding him to destroy the papers thus written, *because* it was *not* his will that such things should be done."

III. *Power and Habit of Spirits to deceive.*

"When spirits wished to instruct me concerning various things, there was scarcely any thing but what was false; wherefore I was prohibited from believing any thing that they spake, nor was I permitted to infer any such thing as was proper to them." (*S. D.* 1647.) "When spirits begin to speak with man, he must beware lest he believe them in any thing: things are fabricated by them and they lie; for if they were permitted to tell what heaven is, and how things are in the heavens, they would tell so many lies, and indeed with solemn affirmation, that man would be astonished; wherefore when spirits were speaking I was not permitted to have faith in the things which they related. For they are extremely fond of fabricating; and when any subject of discourse is proposed, they think that they know it, and give their opinions one after another, one in one way and another in another, altogether as if they knew; and if man then listens and believes, they press on and deceive in divers ways. For instance, if they were permitted to tell about things to come, about things unknown in the universal heaven, about all things whatsoever that man desires, yet [they would tell] all the things falsely, while from themselves: wherefore let man beware lest he believe them. On this account the state of speaking with spirits on this earth is most perilous, unless man be in true faith. They induce so strong a persuasion that it is the Lord Himself who commands, that men cannot but believe and obey." — *S. D.* 1622.

"In modern spiritual manifestations nothing is more common than for the spirits who communicate to say they are such or such a person, perhaps a departed friend, or relative, perhaps some great man, Washington, Franklin, or Swedenborg. We have some light concerning this in the following." "That spirits may be induced who represent another person: and the spirit, as also he who was known to the spirit, *cannot know otherwise than that he was the same.* This has many times been shown to me, that the spirits speaking with me did not know otherwise than that they were the men who were the subject of thought, neither did other spirits know otherwise; as yesterday and to-day some one known to me in life [was represented by one] who was so like him in all things which belong to him, *so far as they were known to me*, that nothing was more like. Wherefore let those who speak with spirits beware lest they be deceived, when they say that they are those whom they know, and that they are dead. For there are genera and species of spirits of a like faculty; and when similar things are called up in the memory of man, and are thus represented to them, they think that they are the same person. Then all the things are called forth from the memory that represented those persons, both the words, the speech, the tones, the gestures, and other things, besides that they are induced to speak thus when other spirits inspire them." (*S. D.* 2860, 2861.) Again: "There are others who induce upon themselves so dexterously the persons of others, that the deception can scarcely be detected." (*S. D.* 4277.) "It is one of the wonders of another life which scarce any one can believe, that, as soon as any spirit comes to another, and especially when he comes to man, he instantly knows his thoughts and his affections, and what he had been doing to that time, thus all his present state exactly as if he had been with him ever so long. Such is the nature of communication." (*A. C.* 5383.) "It was shown me to the life, in what manner spirits flow in with man: when they come to him they put on all things of his memory, thus all things which the man has learned and imbibed from infancy, and the spirits suppose these things to be their own; thus they act, as it were, the part of man with man." — *A. C.* 6192.

"How often do we hear of such an one having had a communication from his or her father or mother, or from their little child, or some friend or acquaintance in the other world! These extracts show how much such persons are [liable to be] deceived. Some other spirit, a lying spirit, flows into their memory, and there puts on all they know or ever knew about their father, mother, brother, sister, or little child, friend or acquaintance, and raps, or writes, or speaks, just as the persons asking the communication might expect those they are thinking of to do, imitating the tones, gestures, handwriting, &c., and telling all or any thing those persons themselves could tell. So that it is no sign that a spirit is the one he professes to be, because he *appears* to be, or because he tells what no one knew but the questioner." *

IV. *Concerning some who desire to be familiar Spirits.*

"An account of the hell of the men of the Ancient Church. The hells of the men of the Noetic or Ancient Church for the most part consist of magicians, who have huts and places of entertainment scattered up and down in the desert. They wander about there with staves of various forms in their hands, some of which are stained with necromantic juices: by these, as in former times, they still exercise their arts, which are affected by the abuse of correspondences, by fantasies, by persuasive appearances, which formerly gave birth to miraculous faith and miraculous works, and also by exorcism, incantation, fascination, and sorcery, and several other infernal contrivances, whereby they present illusory appearances as if they were real. Their hearts' greatest delight is to utter prophecies and prognostications, and *to be familiar spirits.* These chiefly have given rise to the various enthusiasms of the Christian world. — *Cor.* 45.

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* J. R. Hibbard.

V. *Concerning some who desire to return into the World.*

"There are very many spirits at this day who are desirous to not only flow into man's thoughts and affections, but also into his speech and actions, thus even into his corporeals; to flow into man's bodily things is to obsess him. The spirits who will and intend this are those who, in the life of the body, had been adulterers, that is, who had perceived delight in adulteries and persuaded themselves that they were lawful; and also those who had been cruel; the reason is, because both the former and the latter are corporeal and sensual above others, and have rejected from themselves all things concerning heaven, by attributing all things to nature, and nothing to the Divine; thus they have closed up interior things to themselves, and have opened external things; and because in the world they were solely in the love of these things, therefore in the other life they are in the desire of returning into them through man by obsessing him." — *A. C.* 5990.

VI. *Great Danger attending the being led by Spirits.*

"But to speak with spirits at this day is seldom given, since it is dangerous; for then the spirits know that they are with man, which otherwise they do not know; and evil spirits are such that they hold man in deadly hatred, and desire nothing more than to destroy him both as to soul and body, which also is done with those who have indulged much in fantasies, so that they have removed from themselves the delights suitable to the natural man. Some also, who lead a solitary life, sometimes hear spirits speaking with them, and without danger; but the spirits with them are at intervals removed by the Lord, lest they should know that they are with man: for most spirits do not know that there is any other world than that in which they are; thus also they do not know that there are men elsewhere; wherefore it is not lawful for a man to speak in turn with them, for if he should they would know it. Those who think much on religious subjects, and are so intent upon them as to see them as it were inwardly in themselves, also begin to hear spirits speaking with them: for the things of religion, whatever they are, when man from himself dwells upon them, and does not modify them by the various things which are of use in the world, go interiorly, and there subsist, and occupy the whole spirit of the man, and enter the spiritual world, and move the spirits who are there; but such persons are visionaries and enthusiasts, and whatever spirit they hear they believe to be the Holy Spirit, when yet they are enthusiastic spirits. Those who are such see falses as truths, and because they see them, they persuade themselves, and likewise persuade those with whom they flow in." — *H. H.* 249.

Are not these warnings strikingly applicable to the circumstances of the times? Do we not now see a wide spread manifestation of spiritual intercourse which had no existence in Swendenborg's day? And do not men now get from spirits the kind of replies and the kind of information which he foretold they would get? Spirits do not always give men just that information which they had before expected to receive, but they always give them something which is in accordance with their ruling inclinations and desires, and something through which they may gain an influence over them, and so induce them finally to believe whatsoever they communicate to them. Do we not see in the results attending these modern manifestations almost innumerable instances in which the spirits acquire a power of persuasion over the minds of their subjects that is all but irresistible — cases in which it seems, in the language of one of the above extracts, that the man "cannot but believe and obey"?

It is impossible to do justice to this branch of our subject, and bring fairly into view the entire scope of Swedenborg's teachings in this respect, exhibiting in full the complete manner in which he preoccupies and explains the whole ground in question, without going far beyond any reasonable limits in the copiousness of our extracts. We should need at least a good sized octavo volume to quote all that he has written bearing on this subject; and another one, or more, in which to elucidate and confirm their application. All we can hope to do in a few lectures is to give men a slight foretaste of the quality of these revelations, and point them to the writings in which they are contained.

He was himself let into the various spiritual states in order that he might describe them from experience, and so put them on record for the future instruction and use of the church and of men. Hence we find in his writings accounts of the various ways in which spirits operate to produce their effects, the manner in which they flow in with man and possess themselves of his powers, and the various abnormal states into which man himself may be brought — such as the different degrees of the mesmeric sleep, the state of trance, and the sensations experienced on passing out of the natural body.

He uncovers, too, all the machinations of evil spirits in the other life; exposes the innumerable arts which they practise for deceiving men; how many things they will feign, for the purpose of leading them astray; how much seeming goodness or apparent piety they will sometimes assume, in order to gain an influence over their minds; and how many true disclosures they will make in regard to minor things, that they may inspire a confidence that the falsities which they utter about *important* things are true also.

One point to which we desire particularly to call attention in all this is the fact that all these disclosures, instructions, and warnings in regard to this matter were *providentially given beforehand.* They were put on record by a man claiming to be a divinely commissioned seer, a century before they were actually required for practical use, in an age in which the church, so far as could be discerned by men, had no special need of them, and before the circumstances to which they more particularly refer had begun to arise. This, of itself, is, we think, a very powerful consideration in favor of the divine origin of his mission, and of the New Church revelation.

With respect to the future history of these modern manifestations, we may, perhaps, be allowed in this connection to make a passing remark, which will be of the nature of a conjecture.

It will be remembered that we have already alluded to the diverse qualities of these communications; to the fact that while some of them were comparatively good, and imbodied a considerable degree of truth, others were extremely evil, teaching a large amount of folly and falsehood. It is our opinion that these different characteristics will continue to increase and become more and more decidedly marked as spiritualism advances. It will be discovered ere long by the sincere and truth-loving consulters of the mediums that there are *evil* spirits in the other world, as well as good ones; that that world abounds in deceivers and liars; that many subtleties are put forth by the spirits, which, though at first having all the appearance and plausibility of truth, are yet founded in fallacy, and lead to persuasions that are perniciously false. In this way we think there must ultimately be produced a division among spiritualists. Those who retain a respect for the sacred Scriptures, and an affection for genuine religious, spiritual, and moral truth, will be gradually led to separate themselves from those who take a different course — from those who throw aside the revelations of the Bible as of no account, who believe that there is no real evil in the universe, that all is one great progression towards good, and place full confidence in and reliance upon whatever the spirits they are in communication with have a mind to tell them.

It is also our belief that when such a separation does take place between spiritualists, the communications which are received by those who are religiously inclined will improve in character, and that their votaries will gradually be led nearer and nearer to the truths of the New Jerusalem; while, on the other hand, those that are received by the opposite circles will tend more and more downward, and finally end in what was anciently meant by sorcery, magic, and witchcraft, or necromancy.

In the seventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew we read concerning the two ways — a *narrow* way which leadeth unto life, and a *broad* way that leadeth to destruction. These ways are, of course, spiritual, and all men are daily travelling in one or the other of them. All are, by the continual habits of their lives, becoming, on the one hand, less selfish, and therefore wiser and better, or, on the other hand, *more* selfish, and therefore more evil and more in love with the false. Hence the many who at this day suppose and teach that there is but *one* spiritual way, that the growth of mind is only upward, that every person, by a route more or less direct or more or less circuitous, is all the while becoming better and wiser, do not allow themselves to be guided by the light of this divine truth; and on a careful examination, their supposition will be discovered to be a most grievous fallacy, infused by evil spirits for the very purpose of lulling men into a fatal feeling of security in regard to their spiritual condition. The belief is one which strongly induces a state of spiritual sleep, giving an impression that our progress is at all events being worked out, however we may continue to live; thus withdrawing our minds from any active or vigorous opposition to our own evil inclinations, and deceiving us into a contentment with our present impure and selfish states of affection, under a general impression that all will come out right for us at last.

Viewed from a sound philosophy and in genuine light, the progress of the human spirit will be seen to be not always in one direction. The two opening lines of development diverge from each other from the very start, and at length bend away into two exactly opposite terminations. That there is a progress in evil as well as in good, in folly as well as in wisdom, a successive degradation as well as a successive elevation of soul, a progress downwards as well as a progress upwards, a growth of spiritual disease as well as a growth of spiritual health, and that these two kinds of development and progress result from the constitutional laws of our being, is too obvious a fact, one too fully imaged every where in nature, and one too broadly written out on every page of the world's history, on every present state of human society, and on every individual experience, to be long seriously called in question by the truly rational and inquiring mind.

Some acorns, owing to defects in their organization, produce only gnarled and crabbed oaks, unfit for the ordinary uses of timber; some rosebuds have worms in them; and some men, when they pass out of this world, carry with them a ruling love for what is evil wrapped up in the imperishable folds of their spirit. At the separation called *death* the spirit leaves the body forever behind, never more to return to it, and enters at once upon the career of its eternal existence. There is no law in the universe that is retrogressive in its action; no process in nature ever moves backward; the fruit never returns to its flower, nor old age to youth; the plant never goes back and becomes a seed, nor an oak an acorn, the beast an embryo, nor the bird an egg. So, neither does the immortal spirit, after having once in the order of nature shuffled off its bodily coil, ever return hither to take it up. As no departed spirit ever returns to a material body, or ever possesses any body which it does not carry with it when it goes away, so there are no spirits in the other life who have not once been in material bodies, and lived a natural life in them, as we are now doing, if not upon *this* earth then upon some other. Every angel in heaven, every devil in hell, and every spirit in the world of spirits, midway between heaven and hell, has been a man, and lived a life in a natural body upon some one of the innumerable earthly globes there are in the universe. There are no races of beings created originally in a disimbodied state; no original demons, no original angels; no class of created intelligences with native constitution and endowment superior to man's. To reverse our illustration: as there is no fruit that ever returns to a flower, and no spirit that ever returns to a body, so there is no fruit that has not emerged from some flower, no rose that is not the expansion of a bud, no butterfly that has not been evolved from some creeping worm, nor a plant or an oak that did not come from a seed or an acorn. Every grown man has been an infant, every beast an embryo, every bird an egg; and, as we before said, every angel and every devil a man.

Here, then, we have opened out before us the two grand vistas of spiritual development and spiritual destiny. Every place in the universe is open to man. No one so mean that he may not covet the best gifts and aspire to the highest; and no one so high in this world, or so secure, that he may not slide away from his level, and fall to the lowest. Along one way angelic influences beckon him on to the most exalted states of created existence — the purest love, the largest culture, the profoundest bliss. Along the other, flushed malice inflicts its stab, secretive envy weaves its tangled web, pale avarice curves its spine and shuffles its feet, and all the shapes of blight and deformity peep and mutter.

In one direction the highest, holiest, most glorious temples in the universe are waiting to swing back upon their golden hinges their seven-leaved gates, and welcome every man and every woman who can summon their inmates to the portals by the magnetic touch of a sympathetic affection. In the other direction yawn the entrances to those dens — deeper and darker than any habitations of earth — where the malignant, the treacherous, and the vile open their creaking doors to birds of a similar feather.

So far as we cherish within ourselves an actual love for what is good, and delight in the things pertaining to the Lord's kingdom, just so far we advance in the one direction; while so far as we allow to operate in us a love for what is evil, false, and selfish, so far we advance in the other. The law which determines our destiny hereafter is not an arbitrary external regulation, or merely verbal commandment, but a vital, organific force constantly at work in the desires and affections of the spirit; and is as self-executive and as precise in its adjustments, when it sinks the evil spirit to *his place* and elevates the good to his, as that law of gravitation by which the leaden plummet falls through the body of water, and the balloon of hydrogen rises to the upper atmosphere.

While we remain in this world we are left by our Creator in perfect moral freedom — in freedom to choose and follow either one of these two ways; and when men are transferred to the other world their freedom is not taken away. They there continue in the way upon which they have entered here. In this world a man pursues the evil way because he loves it better than the opposite good; and in that world, with the same freedom of choice, he will pursue it still for the same reason. His continual choice becomes a confirmed and permanent state of the will, a fixed habit of mind; and that which constitutes his very *life's love* is never changed to eternity.

LECTURE V.

REASONS FOR ACCEPTING THE REVELATIONS OF THE NEW JERUSALEM AS TRUTH.

"Forever, O Jehovah, thy word is established in heaven. Thy truth is unto all generations." — *Psalm* cxix. 89.

In resuming the theme upon which we have been addressing you for several evenings past, and in carrying it forward to its completion on the present occasion, it may be useful to pause here a moment and briefly consider the ground which has been passed over.

In the first place we endeavored to give some account of man's spiritual nature with reference to his future existence. We attempted to describe the mode in which the resurrection takes place after the death of the material body, the form and functions of the spiritual body, and to say something concerning the first state in which men find themselves after they pass out of this world.

We then undertook to show something of the manner in which departed spirits continue to be associated with men here, and of the different methods in which men can become sensible of their presence, and receive communications from them. The manner in which the divine revelations that are recorded in the Scriptures were made was to some extent explained, as well as the method and character of that other kind of spiritual intercourse which is there spoken of. We endeavored to show the difference between them, and confirmed our views of them, to a considerable extent, from the records of the Bible. We next proceeded to point out the distinction which exists between the church of the New Jerusalem and modern spiritualism; assigning to the former the character of a divinely appointed revelation, and to the latter that of a series of miscellaneous communications from individual spirits.

In our last lecture we proceeded farther, and adduced some of the reasons for admitting the truth of the superior claim which the New Church sets up, and for preferring the disclosures made through Swedenborg before those coming from the modern mediums. The first consideration there brought forward was that the superiority of the claim itself, under all the attendant circumstances in which it is made, is a strong *prima facie* evidence in favor of the superior character of Swedenborg's mission. The second argument we adduced was drawn from the fact that Swedenborg was a seer, and that having "his eyes open" into the other world, he needed not that spirits should testify to him concerning the state of things in their world, for he was enabled to observe them for himself, and so could report them over to us in a more reliable form than when coming through unknown, miscellaneous, and contradictory spirits.

The third reason given was that the revelations coming through Swedenborg constitute a complete, self-consistent, and harmonious system, all the parts of which agree with all the other parts; while the communications of spiritualism present only a vast mass of heterogeneous, incongruous, and contradictory matter.

The fourth consideration we ventured to advance was the relative extent of his disclosures as compared with those of spiritualism. And under this head we endeavored to give some idea of the vastly greater amount of real information concerning all the laws, conditions, and phenomena of the other life conveyed in the writings of Swedenborg than are contained in all other books put together, or than can be obtained from all other sources put together.

The fifth thought we presented was the circumstance that the revelations of the New Church, coming a hundred years before them, completely forestall, overlook, and account for the phenomena and disclosures of spiritualism. Under this head we endeavored to show, to a limited extent, that these writings, while describing beforehand the general facts which have since occurred, contain, also, such admonitions and warnings in regard to the dangers attending that kind of intercourse as we should rationally expect to find in a divinely-accorded revealment.

In the course we have thus pursued, it has been one object with us to bring into view the fact that the New Jerusalem has something to offer on these and kindred subjects; that it has been provided, from some source, with definite and rational doctrine on all points relating to man's future state and destiny; that it is endowed with a kind of teaching on important subjects calculated to meet the wants of the times in a manner in which other theological systems are not prepared; and that the light it is enabled to cast over these mysterious questions points to it as possessing qualities that fit it to become what it is divinely intended to be — the Christian church of the future.

6. We proceed next to the consideration of our sixth reason. *The contents of the New Jerusalem revelation are based on the sacred Scripture.*

In this particular it is most diverse from spiritualism. It does not present itself in an attitude of antagonism to the religious truth of the past. It does not array itself, as the latter does, against the teachings of holy writ, but conforms to them and confirms them. It takes up the former revelations divinely made, and carries them forward to completion. God has always provided that there should be a testimony to his truth in the world, shining with as clear and full a light as the intellectual eyes of the epoch were capable of bearing, and has continued to increase that light as often as the world's intelligence has passed on to a new plane. The system of the New Church, therefore, comes before the world with the history of fifty centuries at its back. It comes as the latest born and the inheritor of the spiritual wealth of all the churches. It joins on organically upon that great tree of heavenly disclosure which the Lord planted early in our earth, and which, under his own guardian care and nurture, has all along been extending its growth through the ages. It clothes the sturdy branches of that tree, all over, with a fresh and living foliage of particular and definite truths, which derive all their vigor and beauty from the original sap that has forever circulated in the trunk.

The light of this revelation fulfils the prophecies of those which have come before. It presents those very disclosures which the Scriptures so frequently teach us to look forward to and expect. Itself distinctly foretold by name as a city that should one day descend out of heaven — a city that should be enlightened by a supernatural light — it unveils the mysteries that were hidden behind the symbolic curtain of the Apocalypse, exposes to our view the scenes of the Last Judgment — the Destruction of Babylon, the Casting Down of the Dragon, the Second Coming of the Lord, the Unsealing of the Book, the going forth of the White Horse, the End of the former Dispensation, and the commencement of the New Age.

It explains the *meaning* of what has been revealed before; removes from our minds the difficulties which surround many things in the old Scriptures by showing in what manner they are to be understood, and raises our respect for them by making known the nature and extent of their inspiration. Obscurities are cleared up, seeming contradictions harmonized, discrepancies accounted for, parables explained, preceptive truths interiorly unfolded, and a flood of genuine rational light is thrown over all the cloudy appearances of the letter. The sacred Scripture is so clearly demonstrated to be really the word of God that it can be seen in intellectual light by those who religiously study the writings.

In one place Swedenborg says that what is represented and signified in the internal sense by most of those things that are named in the letter "has heretofore been known to no one; nor could it be known; because the world, even the learned part of it, has heretofore imagined that the historical portions of the

Word are *merely* histories, and infold nothing deeper. And although they have said that every iota is divinely inspired, still by this they meant no more than that such historical narratives were made known by revelation, and that certain tenets may be deduced from them applicable to the doctrine of faith, and profitable to those who teach and to those who are taught; as also that, in consequence of being divinely inspired, the narratives have a divine force on men's minds, and are operative of good above all other histories. But historical relations, considered in themselves, effect little towards man's amendment, nor any thing towards eternal life; for in the other life they are sunk in oblivion. Of what use, then, could it be to know (for instance) concerning Hagar, a servant maid, that she was given to Abram by Sarai? or to know the history of Ishmael, or even that of Abram? Nothing is necessary for souls, in order to their entering into heaven and enjoying bliss, that is, eternal life, but what has relation to the Lord, and is from the Lord. These are the things to communicate which the Word was given; and these are the things which are contained in its interiors."

"Inspiration," he says, "implies that in all parts of the Word, even the most minute, as well historical as others, are contained celestial things which are of love, or good, and spiritual things which are of faith, or truth, consequently, things divine. For what is inspired by the Lord descends from him through the angelic heaven, and thus through the world of spirits, till it reaches man, before whom it presents itself such as the Word is in the letter; but it is altogether different in its first origin. In heaven there is not any worldly history, but the whole [Word there] is representative of things divine, nor is any thing else there perceived, as may also be known from this, that the things which are there are unspeakable [in the language of men]; wherefore, unless the historical portions [of the Scripture] be representative of things divine, and be thus celestial, they cannot possibly be divinely inspired. What is the nature of the Word in the heavens can be known only from the internal sense; for *the internal sense is the Word of the Lord in the heavens*." (That is, the internal sense is the sacred Scripture as it exists, and is read, and perceived, and understood among the angels.) — *A. C.* 1886, 1887.

From the above remarks we gain some idea of the meaning of the first portion of our text, which says, "Forever, O Jehovah, thy Word is established in heaven." And this is what is meant when it is said that the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven; namely, that the mode in which the doctrines of the Word of God are understood in heaven is revealed to men, so that a new earth may be gradually formed here which shall correspond to the heavens, both in understanding and life, and that men may be freely led first to think, then to feel, and at length to act, *like the angels.*

That the literal sense of the sacred Scripture *is* representative of such divine arcana as stated in the paragraph we have just cited, and that it is a receptacle, and thus a repository, of the celestial and spiritual things of the Lord, cannot be made clear to the apprehension unless it be illustrated by numerous examples of interpretation — a process for which we have not the space; but is a thing which can be rationally seen and confirmed the oftener the Word is read in the light of such explanations.

To unfold and publish this interior sense of the Word was the great object of Swedenborg's mission. So important a dispensation is it in the divine economy that this sense should be known to men, and that by means of it the Word of God might be correctly understood and interpreted in these latter times, that it is frequently made the subject of inspired prophecy. In the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation the effect which the opening of this sense is destined to have upon the lives of spirits and men is represented by the opening of the book sealed with seven seals; and in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse this revealment is symbolized by the opening of heaven and the vision of the white horse. So great is the change which a knowledge and practice of the truth contained in the spiritual sense of the Word is to produce in the religious history of the world, that its promulgation on the earth is spoken of in the New Testament Scriptures as being the *second coming of the Lord.* It is the only way in which his second coming will be perceived in the natural world, and the only medium he will use to introduce and perfect the latter day glory of his church. He comes now as the Word revealed. He makes himself known not only as the author and source of the Word, but as being the very truth of the Word, its soul or essence, its light and life. Hence we read in the prophecy already referred to that he who sat upon the horse is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war; and his name is called *The Word of God.*

That some higher understanding of the sacred Scriptures, and some better interpretation of them than is now in current use, is needed in the modern circumstances in which the church is placed seems to us quite evident. The church at large requires some further key to the meaning of the divine oracles than she now possesses, both for her own satisfaction and for her security. She needs it in order that her own children and separated branches may come to some common agreement among themselves on fundamental doctrines. She needs it both for light and for life; to correct the enthusiasms and delusions that arise in her own pale from a misunderstanding of the declarations of prophecy; to defend the Scriptures themselves from the attacks of scientific objectors; and to minister to the new moral and philosophical requirements of the human mind.

Objections to the teachings and records of the Scriptures more numerous than ever before, presented from entirely new points of view, are gravely and persistently urged by naturalists, by spiritualists, by rationalists. And so far as the literal sense merely is concerned, many of these are rightly urged. Without a different mode of interpreting than has heretofore prevailed, the rational decision must be in many instances against the old record and in favor of the new discoveries.

Now, in the New Church system all these difficulties are rationally met and explained. We here have all the freedom of thought, and more, we have all the spiritual science, and more, all the deep philosophy of man and of nature, and more, all the vast fields of newly opened inquiry, and more, that are presented to the mind in spiritualism, in rationalism, or in any system of philosophy. And in addition to all this we have a biblical science which breaks open the shell of divine truth, and lets forth its interior light, takes off the rind of the fruit, distributing the wholesome meat within for the nutriment of the nations. It preserves intact both the soul and the body of the former revelation, only clearing away and stripping off the heavy clothing of dogmas and fallacies and vain conceits with which the officious and speculating mind of the centuries has encumbered it.

Now that a system fully providing for these wants of the church should present itself to the world in such an age as this, that it should have made its appearance at least half a century before the main exigencies had arisen, so that the books containing it might be generally distributed through Christendom, ready to take the new movement in its incipient stages, and rise into notice with it, shows that there is something particularly providential in it; and, connected with the claim it makes, is to our mind a very strong evidence in favor of its divine origin.

A very common misconception which persons form on first approaching the system of the New Church, and hearing the docrine of a spiritual sense taught, is, that it is something that is to do away with the *literal sense*; that it is an interpretation which is to be substituted for the plain and direct meaning of the Scriptures. And the impression thus made upon many minds is, that this mode of understanding the Scriptures is without fixedness; something unstable; something too figurative, and too far removed from common apprehension to be rendered practically useful. The feeling is, that by means of it the Scriptures are likely to be interpreted according to the imagination, the meaning rendered indefinite, and the whole mind be thrown into the realm of uncertainty in regard to it.

As these various impressions are incorrect, it is therefore important that something should be done to remove them.

The spiritual sense does not come to take the place of the literal sense; it does not overthrow it; does not destroy its authority; it leaves the literal sense just as complete as it found it. The two senses are entirely distinct from each other. The one refers to visible things, to affairs and relations existing in this world; the other refers to invisible things, to affairs and relations which exist in the spiritual world. The literal sense is designed for the use of men on earth, and the spiritual sense is for the angels in heaven. Men could not write a book which would be so adapted. All the powers of all the human intellects that ever existed, combined together, could not produce a single page of such a work. Herein lies the reality of its divine origin and inspiration. According to the divine law by which the universe is created natural things are so made that they symbolize and image forth spiritual things. Natural events so happen and flow on that they correspond to and represent changes and varieties of spiritual state and experience; while circumstances and conditions exist in this world which correspond to states and circumstances in the other world, and which, therefore, may be used to represent and describe them. This law of correspondence between the spiritual world and the natural is known in its origin and essence to the Creator alone; it is a law and operation of his own mind and thought. He alone could first know the principles and the applications of this law, and therefore he alone could utter a Word which, while it should be *forever established in heaven,* would also serve for *truth to all generations* on earth. He alone could cause to be written a book which, while it should instruct, elevate, and guide men in the sacred truths of religion, should at the same time serve as a medium by which angels are instructed, enlightened, and perfected, with respect to the same themes.

Now, in making known these things to the world, the New Church revelation does not impair the literal sense of the Word: men will still continue to understand the Scriptures naturally as heretofore. But let us glance a moment at some of the uses which are performed by the revelation of the fact we have set forth. In the first place, by it is shown the divinity of the Word. If we cannot ourselves get a full perception of the spiritual meaning, and understand it as the angels do, yet we can here and there get a few glimpses of it, we can clearly see that the Scripture has more in it than we formerly supposed it had, and as it is far above our entire comprehension we can see that there is a superhuman element in it, we can clearly perceive that it is beyond the power of man to write such a book, and hence its divine origin and inspiration will take a rational and firm hold on our minds.

In the second place, the revelation of this great fact has the effect to turn our minds in the right direction. It points us the way in which all new and true light is to come. It withdraws our minds from the worldly modes of regarding and reading the Scripture and elevates them towards the light that comes down from above. It enables men to begin and think *a little* as the angels do, and enables the angels to come nearer to men and assist them, as far as they are able, to understand the Word better. Thus it makes it possible for men here, though at the very foot of the ladder, to commence their heavenly education, and thereby go into the other world so much the better prepared to make rapid advances there.

Thirdly, the spiritual sense throws a genuine light over the literal sense and enables us to understand *that* better. This is the first great use which it performs for the church. The great need of the world at the present moment is to understand the meaning of the *literal sense.* This is the very sense which puzzles all the commentators. It is the sense about the meaning of which all the controversies and divisions in the Christian world occur. Instead of being every where plain and obvious it is the very thing which in innumerable instances is neither plain nor obvious. How many passages there are occurring in every part of the Scriptures upon which hardly any two commentators agree; how many that are made to mean one thing by Catholics and another thing by Protestants; one thing by High Churchmen, another by Congregationalists; one thing by Baptists, another by Pedo-Baptists! Do not Trinitarians and Unitarians, Calvinists and Arminians, Supernaturalists and Rationalists, continually read their different and contradictory interpretations into the same texts? Who, now, in the Christian world can tell with any certainty the meaning of one half of the literal sense of the Bible? Where can be found a fixed, reliable, and satisfactory interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis, of the prophetical books of the Old Testament, of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and of the whole book of Revelation? Who in the Christian world can tell any thing (otherwise than by conjecture) concerning the meaning of what is said in the literal sense of the Scriptures about the last things — about the resurrection, the end of the world, the millennium, the second coming of the Lord, the last judgment, the descent of the New Jerusalem?

We see, then, that it is precisely the *literal* or natural sense of the Scriptures which at this day needs to be made plain. And this is one office which the New Jerusalem revelation performs. The light of the spiritual sense serves to fix and determine the meaning of doubtful or obscure passages of the natural sense. It is in reality the understanding of the Word from the spiritual sense that is alone definite and fixed, while it is the understanding of the merely literal sense that is variable, floating, *in*definite and *un*fixed.

As an illustration of this, take, for instance, the first clause of our text, — "Forever, O Jehovah, *thy Word is established in heaven.*" What meaning do these words convey to the ordinary understandings of men? What definite fact do they describe to the mind of one who reads them in the light of the common modes of interpretation? Take down the volumes of twenty commentators and you shall find as many different views or suggestions thrown out, and not one of them the right one. As a general thing the phrase will be considered as conveying a poetical figure, or an oriental hyperbole; and the farther you proceed in your investigations the more indefinite will the meaning of the passage become. To the mind of the New Churchman it describes a definite fact — one already referred to, namely, that the divine Word, which men call the sacred Scripture, exists also in the heavens, and is in continual use there among the angels. This is the plain, natural sense of that passage. The words simply and directly assert a definite fact, and by the light of the revelation of the spiritual sense we are enabled to point out distinctly what that fact is; without that light we could not so point it out. We have not here attempted to open to you the internal or angelic sense of this passage, but have only explained it according to its genuine *literal* sense. Take, as another illustration, the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, where the descent of the New Jerusalem is described. We say that by the New Jerusalem is meant a New Church; that by its descent out of heaven is meant that this church as to its doctrines is revealed from heaven; and that when it is said the tabernacle of God shall be with men, it is meant that this New Church from the Lord is to be established among men on the earth.

This we give as the plain natural sense of these things. We do not here attempt to open the internal or truly angelic sense of this vision — the sense in which what is here written applies to the regeneration of man; we only point out the real, external, objective facts to which these passages refer in their genuine earthly or human sense. We simply tell you what the literal sense means; which we should not be able to do if it were not for the light which the spiritual sense of the Word affords.

The same is true of the second coming of the Lord, the last judgment, and all the other events predicted in the Apocalypse. The revelations of this church give the angelic sense of these various chapters, but they give also, what the churches at present first need, the genuine meaning of the natural sense.

We might go through the Scriptures in this way, and from almost every chapter select something that would illustrate these views, some passage which would show how the light of the spiritual sense every where illuminates the letter, making it clear, and how much this light is needed in order that the letter may be correctly understood.

In order to be a New Churchman, therefore, in reading the Scriptures, it is not necessary for a man to attempt to climb up to something which he cannot understand. It is not necessary that he should at once enter into the spiritual sense as the angels do; but only that he should read them *in the light* of the spiritual sense, and thus come to a correct understanding of their genuine meaning in their external or literal sense. The real strength and power of the Word is in its literal sense; without it there could be no spiritual sense; it is the very foundation or base upon which the other is built. Thus, in a manner which we can but very faintly attempt to describe, does the New Church revelation grow, by a most vital and organic continuity, directly out of the divine revelation which has come before.

And not only does it proceed forth from it in a natural and orderly continuity, but the fundamental principles and doctrines upon which it is based are clearly taught in, and can be plainly and abundantly confirmed from, the literal sense of the Scriptures. The announcement of this fact we consider of sufficient importance at least to invite inquiry, and those who candidly investigate the claim find that it is so. They find that all the great leading doctrines of the New Church can be proven from the sacred Scriptures; that they are indeed the real and only doctrines of the

Scriptures; and that in their light they can more plainly and clearly perceive the actual meaning of what they read in the Word of God than they ever could before.

Hence, as the sacred Scriptures are already an acknowledged authority to a large majority of minds in all Christian countries, this circumstance of itself affords another sufficient reason why we should repose with confidence on the truth of these revelations.

7. We will now proceed to our seventh consideration. And the thought we shall here present relates to the fact that *Swedenborg makes known to us the various methods in which the previous divine revelations have been communicated.*

This part of our subject would very naturally, perhaps, have fallen under the preceding consideration — that the New Church system is based on the sacred Scripture; but as the specific points to which we refer are perfectly distinct in themselves, we have concluded to array them under a separate head.

In our last lecture we referred to the circumstance that Swedenborg was *let into* the various abnormal spiritual states — mesmeric, clairvoyant, somnambulic, and spiritualistic — that he might understand and describe them, so, now, what we wish to state is, that he was in like manner led into, and so enabled from experience to describe, all the various mental conditions induced upon men by the operation of the spirit of the Lord upon them, and the different psychological states in which the prophets and other inspired men were when they received their revelations.

He commences with an account of the primeval or most ancient people, when open intercourse with the spiritual world was the common prerogative of all men, the state in which those were who are called Adam, when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, when men conversed with angels and spirits as man with man. He explains what is meant in the narrative where it is said that Enoch walked with God, and was not, for that God took him. He shows in what manner the Lord communicated with the Hebrew patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He describes those mysterious theophanies of the Old Testament, in which it is said that *the angel of Jehovah* appeared unto different persons, and that through that appearance Jehovah himself spake to them; as in the case of Moses at the burning bush, of Joshua when he saw the armed warrior, the captain of the host of Jehovah, on his entrance into the land of Canaan; and of the prophet Ezekiel, when he saw the appearance of Jehovah, as of a man, above upon the altar. He tells us how the Lord communicated with Moses during the journey through the wilderness, and how he appeared to him when it is said that he talked with him face to face, as a man talketh with a friend. He describes the manner in which and the means by which the divine responses were given by Urim and Thummim, when through that institution the Israelites went on important occasions to make inquiries of Jehovah. He makes known the state of *open vision* — the state in which the prophets were when they received their revelations; he distinguishes between the different kinds of visions, and explains the meaning of those representative ones which were shown to the prophets. He also mentions several kinds of vision differing from those which have been ordinarily experienced, and into which he was let only that he might know the nature of them, and be able to put them on record. So, also, he describes the state of divine trance. He was, too, permitted to relate with considerable minuteness what is meant by being *in the spirit*, as where St. John says that he was *in the spirit* on the Lord's day; what is meant by being *taken out of the body*, or to be in a state in which one does not know whether he be in the body or out of the body, as was the case on one occasion with St. Paul; as well as the state in which Paul was when he was caught up to the third heaven, and heard and saw ineffable things, which it was not lawful for the mouth of man to utter.

He says that it was given him to know by lively experience the nature of what is meant where the *being carried by the spirit into another place* is spoken of, but this only twice or three times, to the intent that he might describe it. This phenomenon is several times referred to in the Bible, as in the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings, where Obadiah is fearful lest the Spirit of the Lord should carry the prophet Elijah *into another place*, and so he not be found where he left him; also in the second chapter of the second book of Kings, where the sons of the prophets proposed to Elisha that fifty strong men should be sent in search of Elijah, lest, as they said, peradventure the *Spirit of the Lord had taken him up* and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley. And again, in the third chapter of Ezekiel, where the prophet relates that he was *lifted up by the spirit* and carried away into Babylonia, and set down there among the children of the captivity, by the river Chebar, and that he remained there seven days. As also in the eighth chapter of Acts, where it is related of Philip that after he had baptized the eunuch, as he came up out of the water the *Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip*, and the eunuch saw him no more; but it is afterwards said that Philip was found at Azotus.

The phenomena of dreams are also explained, both the ordinary and the extraordinary, with the intent of causing to be understood the nature of those which are sometimes employed as the mediums of communicating important warnings or divine instruction to men; as was the case with Joseph, both in Canaan and in Egypt, with King Solomon and Daniel the prophet, as well as with Joseph the husband of Mary, and many others who are mentioned both in the Old and New Testaments. It is told in what manner angels flow in and operate to cause such dreams.

We also learn from these writings the various circumstances connected with the temptations which our Lord endured as to his human nature while he was in the world; how he was connected and associated with the beings of the other world; how evil spirits came to him and assaulted him; how they endeavored to affect, to operate upon, and to destroy him, and how he continually affected, operated upon, and discomfited them; how the departed spirits of good men were at times in company with him, and how angels came and ministered unto him. The different kinds and degrees of divine inspiration are discriminated and pointed out, as well as the various styles in which the different parts of the Bible are written. Thus the parts written by Moses differ in style from those composed by David, and the psychological state of those who had prophetic visions was very diverse from that of those persons who composed only inspired histories; while the divine influence which rested upon the minds of Paul and of the other authors of the apostolical epistles was, again, unlike that which was enjoyed by the other classes to which we have referred.

In short, we may affirm, in conclusion, that all the spiritual phenomena connected with the revelation of the sacred Scriptures are in this revelation clearly, rationally, and satisfactorily explained. This is a feature which neither spiritualism nor any other system now before the world possesses to any distinguishing degree. We cannot help regarding it as a somewhat important feature, one which affords a peculiar and striking consideration in favor of the New Church system.

8. In the eighth and last place we adduce the *moral quality of these revelations.*

It is agreed on all hands by Christian writers that the great and paramount proof of the divinity of the Christian religion is its internal quality — the pure and heavenly character of its moral teachings. This is almost universally considered the very hinging point in the evidences of Christianity; and it is often alleged that no dispensation of mere outward, physical miracles, however stupendous, would be sufficient to authenticate the truth of a system which taught what is rationally seen to be wrong, or whose morality was impure; in other words which did not possess the distinguishing characteristic we have already pointed out.

This we consider solid ground. And it is according to the criterion furnished by this rule that the New Church system is to be explored and judged of. No one can enter upon the study of the New Church writings without being forcibly struck with this important feature of their character. Another has well said that "a deep and solemn earnestness pervades every portion" of our author's works. "One may search through the twenty thousand pages of his theological writings, and not find a single passage designed to excite mirth or laughter," or calculated to awaken any impure or unholy emotion. All is serious, solemn, earnest, truthful. The moral atmosphere is every where calm, pure, and serene. The mind is continually led by a gentle and rational influence, withdrawing it from evil and bending it to good, elevating it from earth and pointing it towards heaven. The single aim of the whole system is to make men better; to withhold them from depraved affections, and bring them under the influence of heavenly affections; to withdraw their thoughts from the shade of false persuasions, and introduce them into the full light of spiritual truth; to bring them out from under the dominion of worldly lusts, of natural passions and loves, and of selfish desires and ends of life, and place them more and more under the rule and order of the Lord's kingdom, under obedience to his divine influences, and under the sway and control of holy love, of renewed emotions and unselfish desires.

The very fact that so great a prominence is given in the system to *the spiritual sense of the Word* shows that the chief aim is to awaken into life the religious experience of men, to strengthen its hold upon the character, to render it more interior, to carry it forward to a higher degree of development, and make it permanently abiding.

To effect this end the nature and essence of evil are plainly pointed out. We are shown the origin from which all evil comes, and wherein it consists. Its malignity, its intensity, and its excessive direfulness are held up in a strong and clear rational light. The many hidden and insidious ways in which it at first besets, then invades, and finally enthrones itself in the human heart are most surprisingly expounded; while the awful results to which it leads hereafter, the thick mental darkness, the insane persuasions, and the deep and lasting misery with which it covers men in the other life, are laid open in a manner altogether surpassing the information given on the same subjects in the literal sense of the sacred Scriptures, and surpassing the powers of the human imagination beforehand to conceive.

Contrast this characteristic of the New Church system with what is found predominant in most of the teachings which flow in through spiritualism, in which the real direfulness of evil is almost always overlooked, and for the most part expressly denied; in which wicked depravities and wrong states of the human will are characterized as harmless eccentricities, or held to be only lower forms of undeveloped good.

In the teachings of the New Church the various ways in which evil may be avoided, in the acts, in the thoughts, and in the heart, are openly manifested; how its influences may be withstood, its seeds uprooted from the affections, and itself cast out of the mind and put away. How the opposite good states of mind are to be acquired is also taught; how affections of genuine spiritual love may be induced to flow in and occupy the places formerly filled with evil. The spiritual regeneration of man is every where the one grand theme. The divine precepts of the Word of God, opened according to their internal sense, are made to apply to the cleansing and purifying of the interior life in a manner in which they could not be made to do in their merely literal sense. We are continually pointed forward to higher and still higher attainments in the regenerate life; and the most elevated rounds of the heavenly ladder are brought distinctly into view. The literal language of the law is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as* thyself; but from these revelations accompanying the spiritual sense of the Word we learn that the angels in their world understand this to mean that they are to love their neighbor *better* than themselves; and we here read, too, concerning those celestial beings dwelling nearest the eternal throne, who have advanced so far in holy life as heartily to obey this precept to that degree, and who now continually live loving the neighbor better than themselves.

With respect to the quality of its moral influences, therefore, and the depth of the spiritual purity it enjoins, the New Jerusalem most completely vindicates to itself the very highest claim upon our faith and reception. As, in regard to the general truths of revelation, the new dispensation takes up the line where the former dispensation dropped it, and carries it forward into a further field of development, so, too, in regard to the application of divine truth to the sanctification of the inward life, does the spiritual sense of the Word take up the line of Christian experience at the point where the literal sense leaves it, and carry it forward into the fields of angelic and heavenly attainment.

And is not this what we ought to expect? How could it be otherwise with the heaven-descended city? For the divine motto written over her entrance is, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in* *through the gates into the city.*" And, again, we read the inspired declaration in regard to her: — "*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*"

We have now finished what we purposed to say in regard to modern spiritualism, and have closed also our enumeration of reasons in favor of the revelations given through Emanuel Swedenborg. The distinction and some of the differences between the two have, we trust, been made sufficiently apparent. We are not without hope, too, that several difficulties have been rationally cleared away from before some inquiring minds, and a lighted avenue opened before them along which they can fearlessly and conscientiously pass at least to a candid and thorough examination of the doctrines, if not at once to a full and complete reception.

They will be found to contain every thing that all the divine revelations which have come before them contain, together with much that never has been made known before. No loss, therefore, can be sustained by their reception. Whatever of truth there may be in the literal sense of the Scriptures the New Church has it all, for she has all the Scriptures. She destroys nothing, she rejects nothing. Whatever of good may have been revealed before, or is now contained in the old, she loses not, she accepts it all. She treasures up every thing good and true which the entire past has to offer, and only adds to them those newer and richer treasures of light and knowledge which have descended to her, as her birthright, from above.

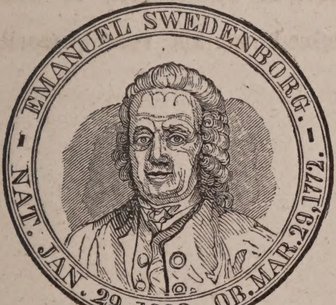
SOME ACCOUNT

OF

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

AND

HIS WRITINGS.


EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.
NAT. JAN. 29, 1688. OB. MAR. 29, 1772.

BOSTON:
OTIS CLAPP, 23 SCHOOL STREET.
1854.

THE accompanying "Memoir" of Swedenborg was written by Rev. T. O. Prescott, of Glasgow, and will be found prefixed to his recent work, "*Gems from Swedenborg*."

MEMOIR OF SWEDENBORG.

It has too generally happened that those whom Divine Providence has from time to time raised up to be the great teachers of mankind, have been abused or neglected by the age in which they lived. This was the case with the apostles of the Christian dispensation, and even with its Divine Founder Himself. Of Him they said, "He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye Him?" And in like manner, of his apostle Paul it was affirmed, that "much learning had made him mad;" and he was obliged to defend himself against the charge: "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (Acts xxvi. 25.) In the course of years and of ages it came at length to be clearly seen and fully settled that the apostle indeed was not mad, as was thought, but spoke in reality the words of truth and soberness, and that truth, too, inspired from heaven. And we, who have been brought up in this belief, and who live in an age when that faith has been long established, are apt to wonder at and censure the incredulity of those who made such charges, and who were unwilling to receive the glorious truth of the new dispensation then presented to them.

But, indeed, it is to be feared that we are but little wiser, in this respect, than they were. The men of the present day are hardly more disposed to receive or listen to what is *new*, however true it may be, than were the men of a former age. Prejudice is still alive, and ever ready to do its wonted work of shutting up men's eyes and ears now, as then. What men have been accustomed to believing and holding they wish still to believe and hold, and nought else. What is old is good and true; what is new, they think, must be false: "No man having drunk old wine," saith the Scripture, "straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better." Thus it is. Men, in the mass, are creatures of habit and custom; they do as they have done, and walk in the way of their fathers; or if they chance to hear something new that strikes them as true and reasonable, they fear to receive it till they first inquire whether "any of the rulers have believed on him." Few there are who have sufficient independence of mind to think and judge for themselves, and still fewer whose love of truth so far transcends selfish and worldly considerations as to render them willing to incur the risk of temporal loss, or of odium amongst friends and acquaintances, in order to obtain it.

There has seldom been a more favorable opportunity of observing the truth of this view than exists in our own day, and at this moment. There has appeared in the world within a century past a writer such as, for height, depth, and extent of intellect and learning combined, or for the importance and grandeur of the truths he has set forth, it may unhesitatingly be said, has not before appeared amongst men; one whose teachings comprehend the essential principles of all religion, philosophy, and science, bound together into one grand system; one who has undertaken and successfully executed the great and difficult task of reconciling reason and revelation, of harmonizing the Word with the works of God; who, beginning with the Deity himself, the Creator and Source of all things, has pictured forth his essential nature, character, and mode of existence, with as much distinctness, exactness, and fulness of portraiture, as it is possible for the finite faculties of man to conceive of in relation to the infinite Divinity; then, descending from the Creator Himself into the first sphere of his creation, the spiritual world, he has not only described the scenes, but stated and explained the laws of that world, entered into a consideration of the very substances of which it is composed, and demonstrated the nature, character, and kind of existence of the intelligent beings who inhabit it; the joys of heaven, the pains of hell, are set forth, neither vaguely nor fantastically, but soberly, rationally, and clearly; the writer explaining at every step causes and principles, while describing appearances and effects. The teacher then comes down to earth, the natural world; and armed as he is with stores of universal science, master of the three kingdoms of nature, he is able to penetrate into the essential principles of matter, and point out the presence and operation every where of powers from the spiritual world, giving matter all its life, strength, and organization; showing thus the connection between the two worlds, and declaring at the same time the laws of that connection; and withal, never forgetting to direct the attention of the observer to the lovely image of the Creator stamped on every part of his creation, and the distinct traces of his handiwork every where discernible, — thus ever teaching his reader reverently to "look through nature up to nature's God." Thus has this writer given to the world a complete system of religious philosophy.

But his services to mankind do not stop even here: this is but a part of his work. Having given religion and spirituality to philosophy and science, he now brings reason and philosophy to religion, and makes them what they were meant to be, her handmaids, not her antagonists. With a mind enlightened from above, he is enabled to penetrate into the mysteries of the Word of God, to unfold its hidden meanings, to lay down rules of interpretation which have power to draw forth the true sense of every passage, and thus perfectly to reconcile all the parts of the great Book of Divine Revelation with each other, and at the same time with the works of the same Great Author, as displayed in the outward creation. Then, from the Word of God thus rightly and spiritually understood, he draws forth a system of theology which is rational, beautiful, and in all its parts consistent with itself, with the divine character, and with all we know of the nature of man. He clears away mists, he solves difficulties, he reconciles seeming contradictions, and makes, thus, the profoundest theology an intelligible thing, and religion an eminently practical one. Then, in the third place, from the pure fountain of a true theology, he elicits a sound system of morals and of social laws; showing that love to God and love to the neighbor, which are the essential principles of all true religion, are also the only fountains of pure morality, and the only bonds which can hold society in order and in happiness; and consequently that the reformation of society must commence from within, not from without, and is to be effected consequently by the inward regeneration of its individual members, not merely by an outward reorganization of classes. In the development of these views, moreover, in regard to God's Word, to theology, and to morality, the aid of science and of reason are every where called in; natural knowledge and spiritual knowledge are connected together; heaven and earth are shown to be a *one;* God's Word and God's Works are demonstrated to be every where in harmony, the creation of the same Hand, the production of the same intelligent and omniscient Mind. Thus has Swedenborg performed for mankind the great and most important service, so long desired but never before fully accomplished, of connecting reason and revelation, philosophy and religion together; giving, thus, to theology a proper natural and scientific basis, and to science a spiritual life and soul.

Such is a brief sketch of what this great writer has done. And how, we may now ask, have these remarkable writings been received? It is now more than a hundred years since the first of these works was published, and how much does the world in general yet know of them, and with what eyes does it view them? There is with the mass, even of the religious and philosophical world, a profound ignorance of Swedenborg's true character and writings, and the hastily formed opinion entertained by those who have heard his name mentioned, is almost entirely a mistaken one. But with those who have paid some attention to his writings, there has been too generally shown a spirit of derision and contemptuous opposition to the new truths he has put forth, which shows that the same influence of prejudice and of unreasoning hostility to what is new and contrary to preconceived opinions, is existing and effective in men's minds at this day, when the Lord as Divine Truth is endeavoring to make his second advent into men's minds, as it was at the time of his first coming, in the flesh, into the world. Of Swedenborg it has been said, as of Paul before, "much learning hath made him mad."

A few, however, there have been, almost from the commencement of the publication of these works, who have perceived their truth and beauty, and have used their endeavors to bring the knowledge of them to their fellow-men. And the number of these has been steadily increasing in all parts of the world, but particularly in England and America, where thought in regard to religious things is freer and more active. And within a very short time past, the admiration of this great writer, which has been expressed by a few individuals of acknowledged abilities, and of influence in the literary world, has attracted attention to him in a manner and degree quite remarkable, and full of promise; and the dawn of a brighter day, to this author and the system of truth he has unfolded, seems now to be breaking.

To aid in this good work, — the extension of a knowledge of Swedenborg and his writings, — we here present a brief sketch of his life and works.

Emanuel Swedenborg* was born at Stockholm, in Sweden, on the 29th of January, 1688. His father was a bishop of the Swedish Church, and a man of abilities and highly exemplary character. He bestowed great care on his son's education, and sent him to the University of Upsala, where, in 1709, Swedenborg took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy. While at the university, he applied himself with great diligence to the study of philosophy, mathematics, natural history, chemistry, and anatomy, together with the European and Oriental languages. He was distinguished for an excellent memory, quick conceptions, and a clear judgment.

He displayed, in his youth, some remarkable indications of spirituality. To a friend, who, in a letter, inquired of him what had passed in the earlier part of his life, he wrote as follows: "From my youth to my tenth year, my thoughts were constantly engrossed with reflections upon God, on salvation, and on the spiritual passions of man. From my sixth to my twelfth year it was my greatest delight to converse with the clergy concerning faith; to whom I often observed, that love or charity was the life of faith, and that this vivifying love or charity was no other than the love of one's neighbor; that God vouchsafes this faith to every one, but that it is adopted by those only who practise that charity." Thus early, under the guidance and influence of Divine Providence, was the mind of Swedenborg preparing for the important work which he was afterwards to perform.

Certain rules, which he had laid down for the regulation of his own conduct, have been found interspersed through his manuscripts, such as the following: "1. Often to read and meditate on the Word of God. 2. To submit every thing to the will of Divine Providence. 3. To observe in every thing a propriety of behavior, and always to keep the conscience clear. 4. To discharge with fidelity the functions of his employments and the duties of his office, and to endeavor to render himself in all things useful to society." In these few rules, it may be remarked, we have almost a complete system of religious and moral precepts,—full reliance on the good providence of the Lord, frequent meditation on his Word, and a conscientious, upright, and useful life.

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* For most of the particulars contained in this sketch the writer is indebted to an excellent biography by the late Nathaniel Hobart, of Boston. This work was published in 1830, and was, it is believed, the first attempt at giving to the world an account of the life of Swedenborg, in a volume. A second edition was published in 1845, and a third, with many improvements, in 1850. A work on a similar plan, and drawn chiefly from the foregoing, was published in New York in 1841, from the pen of the Rev. B. F. Barrett. In 1849, two works on the subject appeared in London, a "Biographical Sketch," by Elihu Rich, and a "Biography," by J. J. G. Wilkinson.

After leaving the university, Swedenborg devoted himself with great assiduity to literature and philosophy. But he soon became occupied for the most part with mathematical studies and the pursuits of natural science; and before many years, he became so distinguished for his scientific attainments, that at the age of twenty-eight, he was appointed by the king, Charles XII., Assessor Extraordinary of his Board of Mines. The diploma appointing him to this office, states, that "the king had a particular regard to Swedenborg in the science of mechanics, and that it was his pleasure that he should accompany and assist Polheim in the construction of his mechanical works." In order the better to fit himself for his new office, Swedenborg set out on a tour through Europe, to examine the principal mines and smelting works. During his absence he spent much time in the universities of England, Holland, France, and Germany. Soon after his return home, he was offered a professorship of mathematics in the University of Upsala, which he declined. A few years after, he was admitted a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, at Stockholm; and also appointed a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg. He afterwards travelled through Italy, and spent a considerable time at Venice and Rome.

About this period, Swedenborg began the publication of a series of Scientific and Philosophical Works in the Latin language, in which, indeed, most of his works were written, and which was the common language of learned men in his time. To give a general idea of the character of these works, we mention the titles of some of them. In 1717, at the age of twenty-nine, he published an "Introduction to Algebra." In 1719, he published three works: 1. "A Proposal for fixing the Value of the Coins and determining the Measures of Sweden." 2. "A Treatise on the Position of the Earth and the Planets." 3. "A Treatise on the Height of Tides." In 1721, he published the following works: 1. "A Sketch of a Work on the Principles of Natural Things, or New Attempts at explaining the Phenomena of Chemistry and Physics on Geometrical Principles." 2. "A New Mode of finding the Longitude of Places, either on Land or at Sea, by Lunar Observations." 3. "A Mode of constructing

Dry Docks for Shipping." 4. "A New Mode of constructing Dikes, to exclude Inundations of Sea or Rivers." In 1722, he published at Leipsic and Hamburg a work, entitled, "Miscellaneous Observations on Natural Things, particularly on Minerals, Fire, and the Strata of Mountains."

For the next twelve years, he was occupied chiefly in the composition of a very extensive scientific work, which he at length published, in 1734, in three volumes, folio. This work is entitled *Principia Rerum Naturalium*, or "Principles of Natural Things." This is a work of science, remarkable both for depth and profoundness in its principles, and for the minute accuracy and thorough knowledge displayed in its details. The part of it which treats of the mineral kingdom, particularly the treatise on copper and brass, was spoken of with the highest esteem in foreign countries. The secretary of the English Royal Society thus speaks of it: "For the sake of such as understand Latin, we must not pass by that magnificent and laborious work of Emanuel Swedenborg, entitled *Principia Rerum Naturalium*, in the second and third volumes of which he has not only given the best account of the methods and newest improvements in metallic works in all places beyond the seas, but also in England and America. It is to be wished," he continues, "that we had extracts from this work in English." Professor Patterson, of Philadelphia, in a letter written a few years since, observes, speaking of the *Principia*, "The work of Swedenborg which you were so kind as to put into my hands, is an extraordinary production of one of the most extraordinary men, certainly, that ever lived. The air of mysticism which is generally thought to pervade Baron Swedenborg's ethical and theological writings, has prevented philosophers from paying that attention to his physical productions of which I now see they are worthy. Many of the experiments and observations on magnetism, presented in this work, are believed to be of much more modern date, and are unjustly ascribed to much more recent writers."

In the year 1744, Swedenborg published at Amsterdam a work on the Animal Kingdom, in which were contained some remarkable discoveries of his own in anatomy. The merit of these discoveries, also, was claimed by other scientific men, in works published many years afterwards. But the truth was, that Swedenborg loved science and philosophy for their own sakes, not for the sake of fame; and he therefore took no pains to claim to himself the merit of his discoveries. He regarded science only as the means of attaining true wisdom. Speaking, in one of his philosophical works, of those who pursue science for this true and noble end, he says, "Such persons reckon the sciences and the knowledge of mechanical works only as among the ministers of wisdom, and they learn them as helps to the attainment of it, and not that they may be reputed wise on account of possessing such knowledge. They modestly restrain the external mind in its tendency to be elated and puffed up, because they perceive the sciences to form an ocean, of which they can catch only a few drops. They look at no one with a scornful brow or the spirit of superiority; nor do they arrogate any of their attainments to themselves; but they refer all to the Deity, and regard them as gifts from Him, from whom all true wisdom springs as from its fountain."

Such was the spirit of modesty, humility, and devotion, with which the philosopher Swedenborg pursued his scientific investigations. He resembled, in this respect, the illustrious Newton, who, after having given to the world so many grand discoveries in science, said of himself, "I feel only like a child, who has picked up a few pretty pebbles on the sea shore, while the great ocean of truth lies all unexplored before me."

The publication of these works brought Swedenborg much celebrity. Many distinguished literary characters opened a correspondence with him. Count Hopken, prime minister of Sweden, was also on intimate terms with him, and has left a sketch of Swedenborg's character and writings, which is exceedingly valuable as the testimony of a highly competent and impartial judge, and of one who knew him well through his whole life. It is contained in a letter written to General Tuxen, and is as follows: —

"In regard to the late Assessor Swedenborg, I have not only known him these two and forty years, but have also, for some time, daily frequented his company. A man, who, like me, has long lived in the world, and ever in an extensive career of life, may have numerous opportunities of knowing men as to their virtues or vices, their weakness or strength; and I do not recollect to have known any man of more uniformly virtuous character than Swedenborg; always contented, never fretful or morose, although throughout his life, his soul was occupied with sublime thoughts and speculations. He was a true philosopher, and lived like one; he labored diligently, and lived frugally, though without sordidness; he travelled frequently, and his travels cost him no more than if he had lived at home. He was gifted with a most happy genius, and a fitness for every science, which made him shine in all those he embraced. He was, without contradiction, probably the most learned man in my country; in his youth a great poet; I have in my possession some remnants of his Latin poetry, which Ovid would not be ashamed to own. His Latin, in his middle age, was in an easy, elegant, and ornamental style; in his latter years, it was equally clear but less elegant after he turned his thoughts to spiritual subjects. He was well acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek; an able and profound mathematician; an excellent mechanic, of which he gave proof in Norway, where, by an easy and simple method, he transported the largest galleys over high mountains and rocks to a gulf where the Danish fleet was stationed; he was likewise a natural philosopher, yet on the Cartesian principles. He detested metaphysics, as founded on fallacious ideas, because they transcend our sphere, and by means of which, theology has been drawn away from its simplicity, and become artificial and corrupted. He was perfectly conversant with mineralogy, having for a long time been assessor in the mineral college; on which science he also published a valuable and classic work, connected both with theory and practice, printed at Leipsic, in 1734. If he had remained in his office, his merits and talents would have entitled him to the highest dignity; but he preferred ease of mind, and sought happiness in study. In Holland he began to apply himself to anatomy, in which he made singular discoveries. I imagine that this science and his meditations on the operations of the soul upon our curiously constructed bodies, led him by degrees from the material to the spiritual. He possessed a sound judgment on all occasions; he saw every thing clearly, and expressed himself well on every subject. The most solid memorials and the best penned, at the Diet of 1751, on matters of finance, were presented by him."

In a letter to another friend, the same writer, Count Hopken, has some remarks in relation to Swedenborg's theological writings. He says:

"The doctrine of Swedenborg is the most rational of all Christian doctrines, and urges as its first object, that man should possess good and honest principles. There are two parts to the doctrine and writings of Swedenborg. The first is his '*Memorable Relations;*'—of these I cannot judge, not having had any spiritual intercourse myself, by which to judge of his assertions, either to affirm or contradict them, but they cannot appear more extraordinary than the Apocalypse of John, and other similar relations contained in the Bible. The second is his '*Tenets* *of Doctrine:*' of these I can judge; they are excellent, irrefutable, and the best that ever were taught,—going to promote the highest happiness of social life. I know that Swedenborg has related his '*Memorabilia,*' *bona fide.* I once asked him why he wrote and published these 'Memorable Relations,' which seemed to throw so much ridicule on his doctrine, otherwise so rational: and whether it would not be best for him to keep them to himself, and not publish them to the world. But he answered, that he was commanded by the Lord to publish them; and that those who might ridicule him on that account, would do him injustice; 'for,' said he, 'why should I, who am a man in years, render myself ridiculous by fantasies and falsehoods?' I have been convinced of the truth of Swedenborg's doctrine, from these arguments in particular, namely, that there is *One* Author of every thing, and not that one person is the Creator, and another the Author of religion; also, that there are degrees in every thing, and these subsisting to eternity; and moreover, the history of the creation [in the Scriptures] is unaccountable, unless explained in a spiritual sense. We may say of the religion which Swedenborg has developed in his writings from the Word of God, with Gamaliel, 'If it be of God, it cannot be overthrown; but if it be of man, it will come to nought.'"

Such was the opinion of Swedenborg and of his writings, held by one of his contemporaries, a man of the highest standing, intelligence, and excellence of character, and whose own writings evinced such profoundness of intellect, as to procure for him the title of the "Swedish Tacitus."

In the desire to present these weighty testimonials, we have anticipated a little. We now return to our account. We have thus far traced the life of Swedenborg from his childhood to his fifty-sixth year; in which year the scientific work last mentioned, viz., that on the Animal Kingdom, was published. We have seen him,—during this long period,—the philosopher and the man of science; a member of the Swedish Diet and a noble of the realm; befriended by the king, and holding an important office by his appointment; a member, also, of various scientific bodies, and respected and honored for his learning and talents throughout Europe; the author of many useful and profound philosophical and scientific works:—and with all these a good and upright man. Now, supposing, for a moment, that we knew nothing more of his history than what has thus far been recounted, and we were called upon to say, how, according to the common course of things, we should presume this man's life would go on, and what would be his probable course for the remainder of his days, — what would be our answer? Should we not reply somewhat thus: "Here is a man who seems to be altogether given to scientific pursuits; who, like a Galileo, or Newton, or Davy, seems to place his chief delight in the investigations of natural science, and appears to have a mind in every respect well fitted for such pursuits; — a close observer, an accurate and acute thinker, a man of enlarged and well-balanced mind and sound judgment; in a word, a philosopher. A good and pious man, indeed, but having, apparently, nothing of bigotry or fanaticism in his nature, and of all orders of mind the farthest possible from that of a *visionary*. This is the character, and this the turn of mind, which he has now shown for upwards of fifty years; that character seems to be a perfectly settled one. We should, therefore, in all reason, conclude that he will go on as he has begun, that he will continue to be engaged in similar pursuits, and be the philosopher and man of science for the rest of his days." This is the answer, it seems to us, which would be given by any reflecting person, to the above supposed inquiry Now let us compare these probabilities with the facts.

In the year 1749, or about five years after the date of the publication of the scientific work last mentioned, we find this philosopher, Swedenborg, publishing, in the City of London, a work of a most remarkable character; a work professing to disclose discoveries far higher and more important than any of his former scientific discoveries; a work, professing to lay open to the world a new and hidden meaning in the Word of God or Holy Scriptures, quite different from the sense of the letter, and before unknown. And this it undertakes to do, not in a general manner, and in the form of conjectural interpretation, merely; but it begins with the first chapter of Genesis, and, taking up the literal sense, word by word, shows that there is to each word, besides the common literal meaning, another spiritual signification, within it, as it were; and that all these hidden or spiritual significations, in any passage or verse, make, when put together, complete sense; so that, in this manner, each verse is shown to have two distinct senses, quite different from each other, yet each complete in itself. This internal meaning is called the *Spiritual Sense* of the Scriptures. The work itself is entitled *Arcana Cœlestia.*

Now, what could have been the origin of such a work? Whence could he have derived such ideas? We might suppose it possible, perhaps, that by skilful contrivance, and the power of an active imagination, a tolerably complete internal or allegorical meaning of this sort might be invented and carried through a few verses. But what is one to think, when we find the author proceeding, through chapter after chapter, in this manner, not only showing a complete and connected spiritual sense throughout the whole, and in every verse and word; but, moreover, proceeding to show the cause of the existence of that spiritual sense, and even laying down plain principles, by which it may be discovered, not only in the chapters before him, but in any part of the Holy Scriptures? And when, moreover, we find the author not stopping with one volume, but going on with the work, and, in a year or two producing a second volume, connected in regular order with the first, taking up chapter after chapter, and setting forth and explaining their spiritual sense in the same manner and on the same uniform principles, and the whole making complete sense, — it is enough to excite the astonishment of any inquiring mind! But he does not stop here; he still goes on, and produces a third volume, and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, a seventh, and an eighth: and in those eight quartoes, he completes the exposition of the first two Books, Genesis and Exodus. The internal signification, or spiritual sense, of these two Books, is thus completely set forth; not merely stated, but explained; and a reason given for every thing, both for the principle of the interpretation itself, and for every particular interpretation, based upon that principle. And what renders the work yet more remarkable is, that throughout all the eight volumes, there is no mistake made, no contradiction found, in setting forth this spiritual sense; but it is all of a piece, it is one uniform work; so that the spiritual sense of the last chapter of Exodus is found to be connected with and dependent upon the spiritual sense of the first chapter of Genesis, and of all the intermediate chapters. And what, moreover, is the nature of this spiritual sense? Is it of a fanciful or visionary cast? Not in the least; it is simply an exposition of high and important religious truths, concerning man's mind and soul and eternal interests; concerning the nature of goodness and truth; concerning the Lord, man's Creator and Savior. These are the subjects treated of in that spiritual sense; and they are such as would alone be expected to be found in the Word of God.

And now, what are we to think of this remarkable work? To what source can it be ascribed? One of two alternatives, it is plain, must be accepted. It was either an invention or a discovery: this spiritual sense must either have been a contrivance and composition of the author's, Swedenborg himself; or else it was a simple bringing forth of interior truth in the Word of God, which there before existed, and had always existed, and waited only the due time to be brought forth to the world and to the church; just as precious metals lie hidden for ages in the earth, till, in the course of Providence, the full time arrives for their being discovered and brought forth for the use of man. Of the above alternatives, a very little reflection on the description of the work just given, is sufficient to show that the former, (the supposition that it was an invention or contrivance of the writer's,) is altogether untenable: the invention of such a secondary sense to the Scriptures, and the carrying on of such a composition, without error or inconsistency, through whole chapters and books, would manifestly be quite an impossibility; and not less so, that such an invention should then be palmed off upon the world as truth, by a man of the upright and elevated character of the philosopher Swedenborg. Infinitely less incredible is his own simple statement, that such a spiritual or interior sense truly exists in the Divine Word, and that, for the benefit of mankind, he had been made the instrument of bringing it forth to the world, and his mind enlightened to perceive it. Indeed, we know, that from the earliest times, a glimmer of this hidden light has been seen in the church. Origen, and others of the early fathers, spoke and wrote much of their belief in such a hidden or interior sense in the Scriptures; in regard especially to the first chapters of Genesis — the account of the garden of Eden and the fall, Eve and the serpent: so common was the belief in there being another sense than that of the letter, and that that description had an allegorical meaning, that Origen, in his answer to Celsus and his attack on the Scriptures, charges him with a want of ingenuousness and honesty in argument, in bringing forth that narrative as objectionable, because incredible and fabulous, when he very well knew, that it was not intended to be taken in its literal acceptation. But it remained for our own day to see this hidden light manifested in all its beauty and glory, and for a man of our own age to be raised up, as an instrument in the hands of Providence, to bring it forth to the world.

But to proceed with our account. In a few years, there comes forth from the same author another work. This new work contains the exposition of the spiritual sense of the Book of Revelation, — the Book of Revelation, that sealed Book, which has been an embarrassment and a marvel to the church in all ages, and which, indeed, on account of its obscurity and seeming incoherency, was at one time in danger of being excluded from the list of canonical books of Scripture, — this mysterious Book is taken up in the work just mentioned, (entitled the *Apocalypse Revealed,*) and examined chapter by chapter, verse by verse, word by word, in the same manner as was done with the Books of Genesis and Exodus, in the "*Arcana;*" and the interior meaning, the spiritual sense of every part set forth — and set forth in such a manner as to present a clear, connected, and rational meaning throughout the whole Book, from the first chapter to the last. And what is especially to be remarked, — the spiritual sense of this Book, the last of the New Testament, is shown to be founded on the same principles, and discovered by the same rules of interpretation, as the spiritual sense of the Books of Genesis and Exodus, the first of the Old Testament, written, as they were, by other hands, and more than fifteen hundred years before, (a strong proof, that however varied the human instruments, there was One Divine Author of the whole.) Thus, with any particular word, for instance, occurring in the Book of Genesis, and declared to have a certain spiritual signification — when that word occurs in the Book of Revelation, it is shown to have the same signification; and this holds true in all cases. And, moreover, while all these various significations taken together, make in the Book of Genesis, a complete spiritual sense, so in the Book of Revelation they make their own complete spiritual sense. Now, it will readily be seen, that such a coincidence would be altogether unaccountable, nay, impossible, unless there really existed such a spirtual sense in the Word of God, formed there by the Divine Hand: and it is indeed, this uniform spiritual sense, full of high and heavenly truth, in which, in great part, consists the inspiration of the holy volume: it is this, which raises it infinitely above all other works of history or of morals, above all human compositions: and the existence of such a sense, it may be observed, is the strongest proof of the Divine character of those writings which we call the Sacred Scriptures. And truly, had Swedenborg done only this, he would have deserved the gratitude of all who seriously revere the Word of God, for thus bringing a new and most powerful argument from internal evidence, in favor of the inspiration and Divinity of the Sacred Volume.

At various times, before and after the work just described, our author published several Doctrinal Treatises, in which are laid down in the clearest and most systematic manner, all the leading principles of a sound theology, as deduced from the Word of God, seen thus in the new light of the Spiritual Sense. In these works, we have a complete system of profound metaphysics and theological philosophy, and in these works especially, is the strength, clearness, and grasp of Swedenborg's intellect shown. Indeed, there is scarcely a question in the whole range of theology, philosophy, morals, and of the essential principles of science, that is not, some where in these volumes, clearly and satisfactorily settled. The treatises referred to, are the "Divine Love and Wisdom," the "Divine Providence," the "Four Leading Doctrines," and some others.

In the year 1758, our author published a work of a very remarkable character, a "*Treatise on Heaven and Hell, from things heard and seen.*" In this work, the author unfolds, in the most distinct, intelligible, and rational manner, the true nature of those states of existence. He shows, especially, and demonstrates the great truth, that heaven is not merely a *place*, into which, according to a common idea, men can be admitted after death, as one is admitted into a lighted and festive hall, or into a paradisiacal garden, simply by passing a door or gate of entrance. He shows plainly, from reason as well as from God's Word, that heaven is, in fact and in essence, a *state of man's own mind*, a state of love and goodness; that such a state is heaven in the soul, and has in it the happiness of heaven; and that such happiness cannot be communicated to any but such as have in their hearts such love and goodness: thus, that heaven is not so much a gift and reward after death for good actions done in this life, as the necessary result of ceasing from evil, and cherishing good affections. Such love and goodness has in it its own reward, which is heavenly peace — thus heaven. On the other hand, it is shown with equal clearness, that what is termed *hell* is not merely a dungeon, or place of arbitrary punishment (as is the common idea) into which men are cast for having committed certain crimes or evil deeds in this life, but that it is also a state of the soul, a state of hate instead of love, of evil instead of goodness; a state in which the *fire of burning passions* rages and inwardly torments the spirit. Thus, that a man of such character cannot be admitted into heavenly happiness, because such happiness is attendant only upon love and goodness. If therefore he does not find himself in heaven after death, it is not because of any wrath or vengeance in the Divine Being, (who is love and goodness itself,) but because of the incapacity of his own state of mind for receiving the happiness of heaven — heaven consisting, as before said, not in *place*, but in *state*.

This lucid explanation of Swedenborg completely puts to rest the old question (on any other principles inexplicable) how the existence of a hell is compatible with the idea of a God who is perfect love and goodness, and a Being all merciful. The view which is brought forth by Swedenborg, presents the subject in a light entirely satisfactory. He shows, in the first place, that it is a law, and the first law of Divine order, that man should be a *free agent*, for without such freedom he would not be truly man, but a stock, an image, an automaton. Thus man, in order that he may be man, is left free to do right or do wrong, — to act according to the laws of Divine order, of God and heaven, or against them, — as he chooses. If acting in opposition to them he indulges evil passions and propensities, he gradually forms in his own heart that state of evil, which is essentially hell, and has with it the interior torments which are called *hell fire.* And when at death, such a man drops his material body, and enters into the spiritual world, he carries his hell with him in his own heart: and mingling with his like, they together make that state and manner of existence, termed *hell:* thus hell is of man's creation, not God's.

In this masterly manner does Swedenborg expound the grand principles of theology, giving a clear, connected, intelligible, and rational system, throughout, — resting the whole, too, firmly on the Word of God.

In commenting on the work before us, the "Treatise on Heaven and Hell," an important part of Swedenborg's experience comes to be considered. It was not merely, as he affirms, by rational induction that he arrived at a clear understanding of the nature of the spiritual world, of heaven and hell, nor only by an interior illumination of mind, like that by which he perceived the spiritual sense of God's Word, — but by actual spiritual sight. He shows that there is with every man a faculty of spiritual sight, by which he is capable of seeing into the spiritual world, even while he is still in the material world, and in the body: for, as he shows, man is interiorly a spirit, and, as to his spirit, actually though unconsciously dwells in the spiritual world, even now; that the spiritual sight, while man is in this world, in general looks through the material eye out into the material world, but that it is perfectly possible for it to be withdrawn for a time from the material, and then it beholds its own proper world, the spiritual. This is what takes place in all cases of genuine vision, of which there are innumerable instances on record. Indeed, Swedenborg affirms that this was very common in the early age of the world, that golden age, or age of primeval purity, described by the classic poets, and also spoken of in the spiritual sense of the Word. But in these later times, on account of the evil and hardened state into which the human mind is fallen, but few cases comparatively of such opening of spiritual sight exist, and these only for very short periods, and at moments, as in some death-bed scenes, when the departing spirit sometimes exclaims that it beholds a glorious light, — and some, that they hear strains of heavenly music — which experience may be the effect of the momentary opening of their spiritual senses. But many striking cases of the opening of such spiritual sight are described in the Book of Divine Revelation; as, for instance, in the case of the servant of the prophet Elisha, where it is said that "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings vi. 17.) Here, plainly, it was the young man's spiritual eyes that were opened, for his natural eyes were open before, and with them he saw the Syrian army. But, when his spiritual sight was opened, he was enabled to look into the spiritual world, which was really "round about" him and Elisha, as it is round about all of us, though commonly unseen. So, it was by the opening of the spiritual sight that the angels were seen by Mary and others at the Lord's sepulchre, for no angels can be seen with the material eye. Of a similar nature were the visions of the prophets and of John in the Revelation, when "he saw," as he writes, "heaven opened," (Rev. xix. 11,) and when also he beheld a city with golden streets and pearly gates, descending from heaven. (Rev. xx.) All such visions were effected simply by the opening of the spiritual sight. So, the apostle Paul affirms that he was "caught up to the third heaven," (2 Cor. xii. 2,) and "caught up into paradise" and there "heard unspeakable words." (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) Now how was he caught up? — not surely with the body — "flesh and blood cannot inhabit the kingdom of heaven," or enter into it. It must, then, have been simply by the opening and elevation of his spiritual senses, his body remaining in its place.

Now, of a similar character to this, was the opening of Swedenborg's spiritual sight, by which he could behold the spiritual world and the scenes of heaven and of hell, described in the Treatise just referred to. It was not, indeed, from any peculiar favor to him as an individual, or for his own sake, that this privilege, so uncommon at this day, was granted him, but, as he himself often remarks, for the sake of the world and of mankind, and to check the growing unbelief in spiritual things, and in a spiritual state of existence; and in order to explain to men's minds in a rational light the nature and character of that future state on which we are all destined by and by to enter, and which we are placed in this world to prepare for. And this is, in truth, just the kind of revelation that the world at this day needs and demands. Mankind has been sorely in want of it; thousands have constantly prayed for it: they have longed to know the nature of that future state of existence, to understand something of its character, not merely from idle curiosity, but that their thoughts might be elevated by such knowledge, and that they might the better prepare themselves for that future state. And now that information has come; their prayer has been granted; an instrument has been raised up in the providence of the Lord, through whom such instruction has been communicated to the world in regard to that spiritual state of existence, as is of the most elevating and most practical tendency; information that enables the mind to become settled and established in its faith on most important points of belief, by a clear understanding and a rational conviction.

And how, now, has this important testimony to the reality of spiritual things and the spiritual state of existence, been received by the world at large? — By the cry of "a visionary," "a madman!" — Swedenborg, because he has been chosen the instrument for performing this great service to the world, has been pronounced "a visionary." With equal propriety might the apostle Paul have been termed a visionary. Swedenborg states that there are three heavens; so does Paul, for he speaks of the "third heaven." Swedenborg affirms calmly, that his spiritual senses were opened and elevated, in such manner as that he might have a perception of that state of existence, and see and hear what is there. So does Paul. Swedenborg states that he had in spirit been permitted to behold the Lord: so does Paul; "have I not seen," says he, "Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1.) Thus parallel are the cases. "But," exclaims the prejudiced objector, "Paul! Paul! Paul was an apostle! Paul was one of the founders of the Christian Church! Paul lived eighteen hundred years ago! There are no visions nowadays, — the case is entirely different!" To which exclamations it might be replied, "Your last remark is but a begging of the question under consideration. We affirm that though indeed unfrequent, yet there *are* occasionally spiritual visions in these times, as well as in former: and that there is good and very strong testimony that a remarkable case of the kind exists in the instance of this philosopher Swedenborg, not by any means on account of his own declaration merely, but from the nature of the truths and statements brought forth by him, of which our own minds, enlightened, we trust, by reason and God's Word, are the judges. The burden of proof," it may be continued in answer, "falls upon you to show by what law of Divine order, by what change in the character and structure of man's mind, a spiritual vision cannot exist now, as well as in the time of Paul, — in the eighteenth or nineteenth, as well as in the first, century." The truth is, antiquity has a wonderful charm for the mind, and a great power over it: "distance lends enchantment to the view." It is not difficult to believe any thing, however wonderful, to have taken place in that misty and mysterious region, the distant *past;* but now, in these dull, common times, to believe such strange things to be capable of happening, seems absurd. But do you not suppose that those times, to the men then living, appeared as dull and commonplace, as our times to us? Did not the regardless rain fall on Paul's head as well as on yours and mine? and this very sun and moon light his steps as well as ours? Did not Paul, do you think, rise often in the morning with a heavy heart, and after breakfast, go forth to his duties, or sit down to write his Epistles, sad and oppressed in spirit, dejected at the thought of the heavy responsibilities upon him, and awed with the idea that he must address the Athenians to-morrow? And when at length he stood before them and began, did they not ask, "Who is this?" Think you that gaping crowd knew any thing about any great and celebrated Paul (whose name has become so familiar to our ears?) — they had not heard of such a person. "And some said, 'What will this babbler say?' others, 'He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods,' because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear again of this matter. Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed; among them was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." (Acts xvii. 16–34.) Here we have a picture of human nature, as it was, and as it still is. A new person comes forward, a stranger, unheard of before, and utters strange ideas, something new and unusual, something different from what men have been accustomed to hear, and think of, and believe; most of the hearers jeer and mock, and turn away, calling him a babbler; some are rather pleased at some things they have heard, but the interest has not taken sufficient hold of them to make them anxious to pursue the subject further just then, and they go away and forget what they have heard; a few, whose minds were in a receptive state, whose hearts had been prepared perhaps by torturing doubts and secret meditations, and by trials and sufferings of spirit — these at once perceive and seize upon the truths they have heard, clasp it to their bosoms as something long looked for, as precious treasure, and go away rejoicing in their new faith, and resolved to "sell all they had and follow the Lord." Gradually the truth spreads: these few tell what they have heard to others, their friends, who they know have been troubled with similar doubts and difficulties. By and by, these believers meet together, and form a little congregation, and appoint the ablest of their number to preach to them in regard to these new truths, both for their own fuller instruction and for the information of strangers. Years roll away. It becomes an established religious society. Similar societies in neighboring cities league with them, and they form a General Church — which begins to have a name, the "Christian Church." Ages roll on, and this becomes a vast establishment, extending over whole nations, and reaching to distant quarters of the globe. This Paul, who was once a nameless preacher, "a babbler," and "mad," is now looked back upon with the utmost veneration; his words are oracles of truth; whatever he affirmed, whether in regard to himself or others, is implicitly believed. Custom, general acceptance, the belief of ages, undoubting confidence in the opinions of our parents and friends, all go to render the mind perfectly ready to believe those things. Faith is now an easy and natural thing, and we wonder at those strange and hard-hearted unbelievers of Paul's own time, and who had the glorious opportunity of listening to him with their own ears. "O that we could have enjoyed such an opportunity!" exclaim many; "how gladly would we have listened!"

But these persons know not what they say, nor the nature of the human mind. If they are so anxious to have such an opportunity, so ready to be tested, and to show that they would have discernment enough to see genuine truth though heard for the first time, and to acknowledge a great teacher and apostle, though yet unknown to the world — that opportunity is now before them A Paul is now again preaching to the Athenians and to the world; a great teacher is again uttering new and sublime truths. The Lord Himself has come a second time, — not in Person, but in Spirit; not as "the Word made flesh," as before, but as the essential Word, by the opening of the interior truth — the *spiritual sense*, which it contains. Those who believe that, had they been on earth, they would have acknowledged the Lord at his First Coming, or would have readily received the teachings of his apostles, have now the opportunity of making trial of their faith; of showing whether they are able to overcome the inveteracy of custom, the natural opposition of prejudice, the fear of public opinion, the love of the world and its powers and pleasures, (all which difficulties the first Christians had to encounter;) whether in the face of all these, they can, looking for the truth with a single eye, discern it now at its feeble dawn, and advancing steadily and earnestly towards it, be among the first to "hail the rising day."

That there is at this day needed and imperiously demanded a new revelation of Divine and spiritual truth, is, to a sincere and reflecting mind, most obvious. Look at the Christian Church as it now appears — broken up into a thousand warring sects — the first principles of belief unsettled — the very foundation of the fabric loosened, and clouds of doubt and uncertainty hanging every where over it. In regard to the very first article of spiritual knowledge and belief — the nature and attributes of God — is there not mystery, doubt, dispute? — whether He be Unity or Trinity, — in one Person or in three, — a God of pure love, or partly of love and partly of sternness and wrath? Do not those, even, who hold themselves to be certainly orthodox, and fancy themselves beyond question in the right, acknowledge readily that the subject is at least wrapped in mystery, and that they do not pretend or seek to fathom it? Here, then, is the first great point of belief unsettled, or at best not understood. In the second place, in regard to the nature of the future state, the next great subject of religious belief and meditation, is there not a perfect blank of ignorance, — no ideas for the mind to rest upon and delight in, but empty faith, the belief in a mere bare fact? And in regard to this simple outline view, bare as it is, there is uncertainty. A large and increasing denomination of Christians is disposed to doubt and deny the existence of one of the two great parts into which that future state is generally believed to be divided — holding that there is no hell, and that punishment will be done away in that future life. Then, in the third place, in regard to the founder Himself of Christianity, Jesus Christ the Savior, — is there not endless discussion and dispute between the various sects of Christians, as to his true nature, his connection with God the Father, and the nature of his work of redemption and salvation? Finally, the Bible itself, the very source and fountain of religious knowledge — is it not the field of perpetual controversy? are not all its important points explained in numberless different ways by different believers? and in the letter, indeed, are not many parts of this Divine Book wrapped in mystery, and others apparently standing opposed to each other, and clouded with seeming inconsistency? — This painful state of doubt and darkness is not unfrequently admitted by candid religious writers. The following, in point, is quoted from a volume of sermons lately published: —

"The Scriptures make us acquainted with God's natural and moral attributes; and in respect of these, the meanest peasant in our land, who meekly peruses God's Word, knows more than all the lights of the heathen world. But when from the consideration of his attributes, you pass to the consideration of his essence, you feel yourselves involved in darkness. A similar feeling is experienced, when you consider the constitution of the Redeemer's character. Men talk about 'hypostatical union' with as much fluency and as little hesitation, as if they attached some distinct idea to the language which they employ; but they are less likely to impose upon those who have made these points the subjects of thoughtful consideration, than they are to impose on themselves. Nor is the nature of God and the Redeemer involved in greater difficulty than the condition of man. We in vain attempt to reconcile the permission of the entrance of sin with the goodness of Deity — to reconcile the foreknowledge or decrees of God with the free agency of man — and to reconcile human inability with human accountableness. Like the fallen spirits, as described by the poet, you may reason high on these subjects; but, like them, too, you will

'Find no end, in wandering mazes lost.'

"The same difficulties and darkness extend to God's providential dealings. Why is it that so many are born but to look about them and to die? Why is it, that when the mind has just reached its full energies, but before these energies have had scope to exert themselves, 'the silver cord should be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken at the fountain'? Why is it that the lone widow and her orphans pine in starving solitude? and why do 'heaven-born truth and moderation fair wear the red mark of persecution's scourge'? These are questions which may occur to any one, but which none can satisfactorily answer." *

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* See "Discourses by the Rev. Robert Brodie," page 355.

Such are the candid confessions of a religious writer of our own day. Such is the degree of darkness and doubt, on the most interesting and important subjects acknowledged to prevail at this day in the Christian world. Now, are these things — it may be asked — are these things always to be so? Is the church to be forever disturbed with doubts, distracted with warring opinions, and wrapped in this ignorance and darkness? Is the human mind never to be disinthralled from these bonds, and to be lifted above these mists and clouds into the light of clear and certain truth? Did not the Lord promise that the time would come when he would "show us plainly of the Father"? (John xvi. 25.) "Many things," said He, "I have to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John xvi. 12.) Does not this imply that the time would come when the church would be able to bear them, would be capable of receiving and understanding them, and that then many new things would be made known? Is there not in these words a distinctly implied promise of a future and further revelation? And these things *are* now made known; this expected revelation of truth has now been given. For this is now the time of the Lord's Second Coming as Divine Truth, which has taken place by the revelation of the Spiritual Sense of his Word, in which all these promised truths are contained. Here all the doubts and difficulties referred to by the writer just quoted, and innumerable others, are solved and made plain. We know now, and are enabled to understand the essence of God's Divine nature so far as the finite mind is capable of comprehending the ways of the Infinite — and with a prospect of seeing yet more and more clearly, as we rise into higher states of purity and goodness. In this Spiritual Sense of the Word, too, is revealed the nature of the wonderful union between the Divine and Human in Jesus Christ. Here, too, is made known the origin of evil, and how sin first came into the world, and why, in the good providence of the Lord, it was permitted. In the light, too, of this new truth is seen the compatibility of the Divine foreknowledge and man's free agency; not discovered by the "high reasoning" of man, but by revelation from God. Here, too, are explained, in a clear and most consoling manner, the ways of the Lord's providence, and his benevolent ends in all his dealings with his creatures. We are here informed just why it is, that some little beings are merely born into the world, and just "look about them," and then are taken away into a higher and happier state of existence. Here, too, we are informed why others living in this world to the maturing of their powers are then removed to a higher and grander sphere of usefulness. Here, too, we are instructed distinctly for what high and future ends, in the wise providence of the Lord, the good are sometimes permitted to suffer here, and the evil temporarily to triumph! All these important questions are now satisfactorily answered,—all these great truths are now made known, to those who are willing to open their minds to the light of the "New Jerusalem," now "descending from God out of heaven."

And the instrument raised up to make known these truths to the world, is the man whose life and writings we have now been endeavoring to describe. After having risen to high distinction as a philosopher and man of science,—after having laid, by the labor and study of many years, a wide foundation of natural knowledge, and enlarged his mind by the investigation of the laws of Divine order as manifested in the world of nature, he is then called to a new and still higher sphere of thought and of use to mankind; his mind is opened to a view of the world of spirits, to a perception of the profound and interior truths existing in the Spiritual Sense of God's Holy Word, nay, even to a view of the Lord Himself, who commissions him as He commissioned Paul, of old, to be, as it were, the apostle of this new Dispensation of truth, and the herald of the New Jerusalem. This solemn fact, he himself declares, as simply as distinctly, in the following words, which are found in his last great work, which he published in 1771, the year before his death, entitled the "*True Christian Religion; or, Universal Theology of the New Church.*"

"It is read in many places, that the Lord is to come in the 'clouds of heaven.' But hitherto no one has known what was meant by the clouds of heaven: it has been believed that He would appear in them in Person. But, since the spiritual sense of the Word has been opened to me by the Lord, it has been discovered, that by the clouds of heaven is meant the Word in its natural sense, and by 'glory,' the Word in its spiritual sense, and by 'power,' the power of the Lord by means of the Word. —That the Lord is the Word is evident from these words in John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh.' (i. 1, 14.) Hence it is manifest that the Lord is now to appear as the Word. The reason that He is not to appear in Person, is, because since his ascension into heaven, He is in the glorified Humanity; and in this He cannot appear to any man, unless He first open the eyes of his spirit. Wherefore it is a vain thing to believe that the Lord is to appear in the clouds of heaven in Person; but He is to appear as the Word which is from Him and is Himself." "But since the Lord cannot manifest Himself in Person, and yet He foretold that He would come and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows, that He is to do it through the instrumentality of a man, who is able not only to receive the Doctrines of this Church with his understanding, but also to publish them by the press. That the Lord has manifested himself before me, his servant, and sent me on this office, and that after this He opened the sight of my spirit, and thus let me into the spiritual world, and gave me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to hold converse with angels and spirits, and this now constantly for many years, I testify in truth: and also, that from the first day of that call, I have not received any thing which pertains to the Doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, whilst I read the Word." (T. C. R. 776–779.)

Now, here is a simple and direct statement of a fact. Shall we receive it as true, or reject it as false? If the latter, on what grounds? Either its impossibility or its improbability. None will contend for the first; "with God all things are possible," that is, all things not contrary to Divine order; and before rejection on the ground of impossibility, it must be shown distinctly, what law of Divine order is here violated: — as before shown, many such cases are recorded in the Scriptures. But if objection be made on the score of improbability, — that will be best answered by the strong reasons already presented and about to be presented in favor of its great probability. First, then, we have reason to believe in the truth of this statement, on the ground of the character of the man who makes it, — a man, as all along shown, of the clearest and soundest intellect, and of the highest integrity of character; one likely neither to deceive nor be himself deceived; and though a charge has been rashly made by some prejudiced persons against him, like that which was uttered against Paul, that "too much learning had made him mad," yet, as already shown, there is the testimony of individuals of the highest standing and character, and who knew him throughout life, to prove that such a charge is entirely without foundation. But even the modest yet plain declarations of the philosopher himself, are by no means the strongest evidence in favor of the truth of what he affirms. The chief testimony is the *witness of the truth itself*, as it affects our own understandings and our own hearts: — the truth of what he has written and declared, as seen in the light of reason and of God's Word. Truth — spiritual truth, is ever its own best witness. There is a light in it and about it, that makes an impression irresistibly on the open and earnest mind, and testifies to its heaven-born nature. And this is, in an eminent and striking degree, the character of the truth unfolded in the writings of Swedenborg. Whether they be treating of man, — the parts and constitution of the human mind, and the nature of the soul, — or whether they ascend to God — the Divine Man — and the great Prototype of humanity, and seek to give an idea of his Most High nature; — whether they be exploring the mysteries of the word of God, and bringing forth the gems and riches of truth that lie hidden in its Spiritual Sense, — or whether they are picturing the wonders of the spiritual and eternal world, the glories of heaven, the horrors of hell, — still, ever, and on all occasions, is there a calm dignity, soberness, and rationality accompanying all that is said, together with a gentle elevation and purity of tone, but without the least tinge of mysticism, and scarcely of enthusiasm, which give constant evidence of truthfulness, and make you feel that a good and a great mind is addressing you, most comprehensive in its views, most profound in its perceptions, and above all, most simple, sincere, and truthful in its statements. It is impossible that any candid reader can rise from the perusal of any considerable portion of this writer's works, with any other impression than that he has been listening to the teachings of a profound and good man; and whether he as yet fully comprehend his whole meaning or not, he feels sure that the writer at least understands himself, and that there is high and deep truth there, to be understood by him who will apply himself faithfully to the investigation of it. Thus does the truth of these writings bear witness to itself, in the very manner and tone in which it is expressed.

But when the earnest and sincere inquirer, aided by light and strength from above, once gives himself to the full and thorough examination of the great system of truth developed in the works of Swedenborg, he begins to find his first favorable impressions rapidly confirmed and strengthened; proof after proof is brought to bear upon his understanding, till what was at first but a favorable opinion, is changed at length to firm and settled conviction. One great cause of this effect is, that the system of religious truth, laid open in these writings, is strikingly *consistent* from beginning to end. Every part supports every other part; every principle is a link in a chain — a great chain of truths, which, like Homer's, of old, descending from the throne of God, encircles the universe and returns to Him again. In this system it is shown how the existence of God, as a Being of perfect love, is consistent with the existence of the state of evil and consequent unhappiness both here and hereafter. In this system the different parts of God's Word, which, in the letter, often seem to be either unintelligible or opposed to each other, are perfectly reconcilable, in the light of the Spiritual Sense shining from within. Here the great secrets of life and death, man's prudence and God's Providence, the natural world and the spiritual, time and eternity, Divinity and humanity, are brought forth and elucidated, and made clear to the human understanding, in their general aspects; while at the same time there is held forth a rational promise founded on the explained laws of the mind itself, that when, after death, he rises into the light of heaven, he will have these general principles filled with particular and more exact and distinct ideas. Swedenborg has been called a *mystic.* Never, surely, was there a more marked misnomer. Instead of being a writer of mysticisms himself — on the contrary, those things which are mysteries in other religious systems he explains and makes clear. The common doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, is acknowledged to be a mystery; but this mystery Swedenborg solves, and makes the subject simple and clear, — not however in the common view, but in a true view. The connection between soul and body, and the nature of life, is acknowledged to be a mystery, but Swedenborg has opened here a new and grand fountain of light and knowledge. So with all other mysteries in religion and philosophy. For now, as foretold in the Revelation, "all things are made new." The darkness which has hitherto hung over the human mind, in regard to these high and deep subjects, is now to be dispersed: — a new era of light and truth is about to dawn upon the world; the "Sun of Righteousness" is rising "with healing in his wings."

A man — a human being like ourselves — has been chosen, by the Divine will, as the instrument for conveying these truths to the world. And as Moses, a man like ourselves, was chosen, of old, to be the instrument for bringing into the land of Canaan the people with whom a representative Church was to be established, and who was called, too, (man though he was,) up into the mount to speak with God, and receive the tables of his law; — as Paul, a man, too, like ourselves, was chosen, at the commencement of a former dispensation, to be an apostle to teach the new truth to the world, and, in order to enlighten and strengthen him for that work, was admitted in spirit to a view of the heavens and even of the Lord himself; — so now, in our own day, at the commencement of another Dispensation of Divine truth, at this the time of the Lord's second coming in the light of the Spiritual Sense of his Word, has another individual — a man, like ourselves — been raised up as the instrument for making known to the world the truths and doctrines of that New Church which is about to be established on the earth — the *New Jerusalem.* The herald will not be received nor believed, for a time; he has been, and he will be, slandered and reviled; he has been, and will continue to be, by some, and for a while, pronounced a mystic and a madman: the interested, the prejudiced, and the self-confident will scoff at him, as the proud Athenians scoffed at Paul preaching to them the truth — as the doctors of the Jewish Church scorned the words of Him who was the Truth itself. But these things will be only for a time. "Truth is strong, and will prevail." There are always a few candid and earnest minds in the community, anxious for the truth, and ready to seek it wherever it is to be found, and to follow whithersoever it leads. Such there were, even in Swedenborg's lifetime, — men, too, of high character, intelligence, and education, — who perceived the truth of the principles he taught, received them with delight, and sought to make them known to others. Since his death the number has been steadily increasing, in all parts of the world. And within a few years past, many of the profound and original thinkers of the age have repaired to his pages, as their chief source of instruction, and have acknowledged that they could find there satisfactory answers to their inquiries, that could be found nowhere else, in the whole range of moral, theological, and philosophical writers. The signs of the times are now giving token of a change, and a great change, in the view generally entertained of this author. As he becomes more known, surprise and admiration take the place of neglect and contempt; the earnest searchers for truth wonder that they had not been directed to this light before — the intellectual and the learned are astonished that they had passed by a thinker and writer who far excels them both in intellect and learning; and the admirers and collectors of great names are beginning to admit his into their list. And we venture the prediction, that as years roll by, and these writings are examined, explored, understood, more and more thoroughly — as the world grows wiser and better — as the darkness of old error passes off, and the light of truth increases — the name of SWEDENBORG will shine the brightest in the whole galaxy of great names, and his memory be revered as that of the most powerful and most useful of all the human instruments whom Heaven has raised up to communicate truth, goodness, and happiness to mankind.

Swedenborg died in London, in the month of March, 1772. The Rev. Arvid Ferelius, a Swedish clergyman, who visited him shortly before his death, gives the following account of the interview. "At the conclusion of the former year he had a paralytic stroke, which lamed one side and affected his speech. I visited him several times, and asked each time, whether he thought he should then die. He answered in the affirmative. Upon which I observed to him, that as many persons thought that he had endeavored only to make himself a name, or to acquire celebrity in the world, by the publication of his theological system, (which, indeed, he had already attained,) he would do well now to publish the whole truth to the world, and recant either the whole or a part of what he had advanced, since he had now nothing more to expect from the world, which he was so soon about to leave forever. Upon hearing these words from me, Swedenborg raised himself half up in his bed, and placing his sound hand upon his breast, said with great zeal and emphasis, 'As true as you see me before you, so true is every thing which I have written; and I could have said more had I been permitted. When you come into eternity, you will see all things as I have stated and described them, and we shall have much to discourse about them with each other.' I then asked him whether he would take the Lord's Holy Supper. He replied with thankfulness, that I meant well, but that being a member of the other world, he did not need it; he would, however, gladly take it in order to show the connection and union between the church in heaven and the church on earth. He then asked whether I had read his views on the sacrament. Before administering the sacrament, I inquired of him whether he confessed himself to be a sinner. Certainly, said he, so long as I carry about with me this sinful body. With deep and affecting devotion, with folded hands and head uncovered, he confessed his own unworthiness, and received the Holy Supper."

The well-known Dr. Hartley, Rector of Winwick, in his last visit to Swedenborg, in company with Dr. Messiter, asked him to declare, whether all he had written was strictly true, or whether any part or parts thereof were to be excepted. "I have written," answered Swedenborg, with a degree of warmth, "nothing but the truth, as you will have it more and more confirmed hereafter all the days of your life, provided you always keep close to the Lord, in shunning evils of all kinds as sins against Him, and diligently searching his Word, which from beginning to end bears incontestable evidence to the truth of the doctrines I have delivered to the world."

SWEDENBORG'S THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS,

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY OTIS CLAPP,

23 School Street, Boston.

I. *ARCANA CŒLESTIA.*

The Heavenly Arcana which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, or Word of the Lord unfolded, beginning with the Book of Genesis. Together with wonderful things seen in the World of Spirits and in the Heaven of Angels. In 13 vols. octavo, including a copious Index. Price, per volume, $1.00.

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Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 180. Price, 30 cts.; also, cheap copy in paper, 12½ cts.

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V. *DIVINE PROVIDENCE.*

Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence. 1 vol. 12mo. 38 cts. In paper, 25 cts. Also in octavo.

The following are the heads of some of the chapters: That the Divine Providence is the government of the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom of the Lord; That the Divine Providence of the Lord has for its end a heaven out of the human race; That the Divine Providence of the Lord, in all that it does, has respect to what is infinite and eternal; That there are Laws of the Divine Providence which are unknown to men. Those Laws are then successively laid open and applied; the doctrine of a Particular Providence is maintained and elucidated, and the Laws of the Divine Permissions are expounded.

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whither all men go when they pass out of the natural body. It is maintained that the Judgment Day foretold in the Apocalypse has already taken place; that it occurred in the World of Spirits, which is intermediate between heaven and hell, in the year 1757; that the good who had there accumulated since our Lord was in the world were then received up into heaven, and the evil were let down into hell; and it is claimed by the author, that he, being gifted by the Lord with *open vision*, was made a witness of the event, that he might make it known to the world. As may be inferred from the title, the various scenes then and there transacted are minutely described.

⁂ It may be for the convenience of those who are unacquainted with these doctrines to have it stated, that in the foregoing eight works may be found a tolerably complete view of the entire Theological System of the New Church. The student of theology and the philosophical inquirer cannot be said to have mastered the system until they shall have made themselves acquainted at least with the contents of these. A similar remark may be made for the information of those who wish to place this System of Theology upon the shelves of any library, public or private; while the full receivers of the doctrines, and those who wish to learn them in all their details, will not, of course, be content with less than the whole of Swedenborg's published works. Those which immediately follow were likewise written after his illumination, and are considered of equal authority and importance to the others.

1. *APOCALYPSE REVEALED.*

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⁂ Each of the above Doctrines may be had separately, namely: —

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This work was found among the author's manuscripts after his death, and has been recently translated from the Latin by Professor Bush, of New York. It appears to contain simply the Heads, or leading Propositions, which are maintained and more fully elucidated in the *True Christian Religion.*

⁂ The above works complete the Theological System of the New Church, as contained in the writings of Swedenborg. It may here be proper to mention two posthumous works of the author, which, though written after his illumination, have not been brought into the above catalogue, inasmuch as they cannot be said to form an integral portion of his Theological System; having never been published by the author, but laid aside among his manuscripts, and their contents overlaid and superseded by works which he subsequently composed and published. These are, —

1. *The Adversaria.* — Adversaria in Libros Veteris Testamenti; or, Explications of the Prophetical and Historical Books of the Old Testament. In 4 Parts. Edited by Rev. Dr. Tafel, of the University of Tubingen, from the manuscripts of Swedenborg. The whole has not yet been published in Latin, and there is no translation of it into English. 2. *The Spiritual Diary.* — Three Parts of the *Larger Diary*, and Four Parts of the *Smaller Diary*, have been edited from the manuscripts and published in Latin by Dr. Tafel. Two volumes, the 1st and 3d, have been translated into English; one of them by Rev. Mr. Smithson, of England, and the other by Prof. Bush, of New York, and are both published and for sale in this country. 62½ cts. per vol. in paper, and 87½ cts. per vol. in cloth. *The Coronis*, also a posthumous work, which is an *Appendix to the True Christian Religion*, (8vo. pp. 136,) it has not been deemed important, in the present catalogue, to enumerate as an independent work. It is, however, for sale separately, in paper covers.

The following Philosophical and Scientific Works of Swedenborg, written before his Spiritual Illumination, or before his Providential Commission as the Herald of a New Dispensation, have been translated into English, and are for sale in this country: —

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Considered Anatomically, Physically, and Philosophically. Translated by J. J. G. Wilkinson. London edition, 2 vols. 8vo. American edition, 1 vol. 8vo. $3.50.

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Considered Anatomically, Physically, and Philosophically. Translated by the Rev. Augustus Clissold. 2 vols. 8vo. London. $7.50.

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